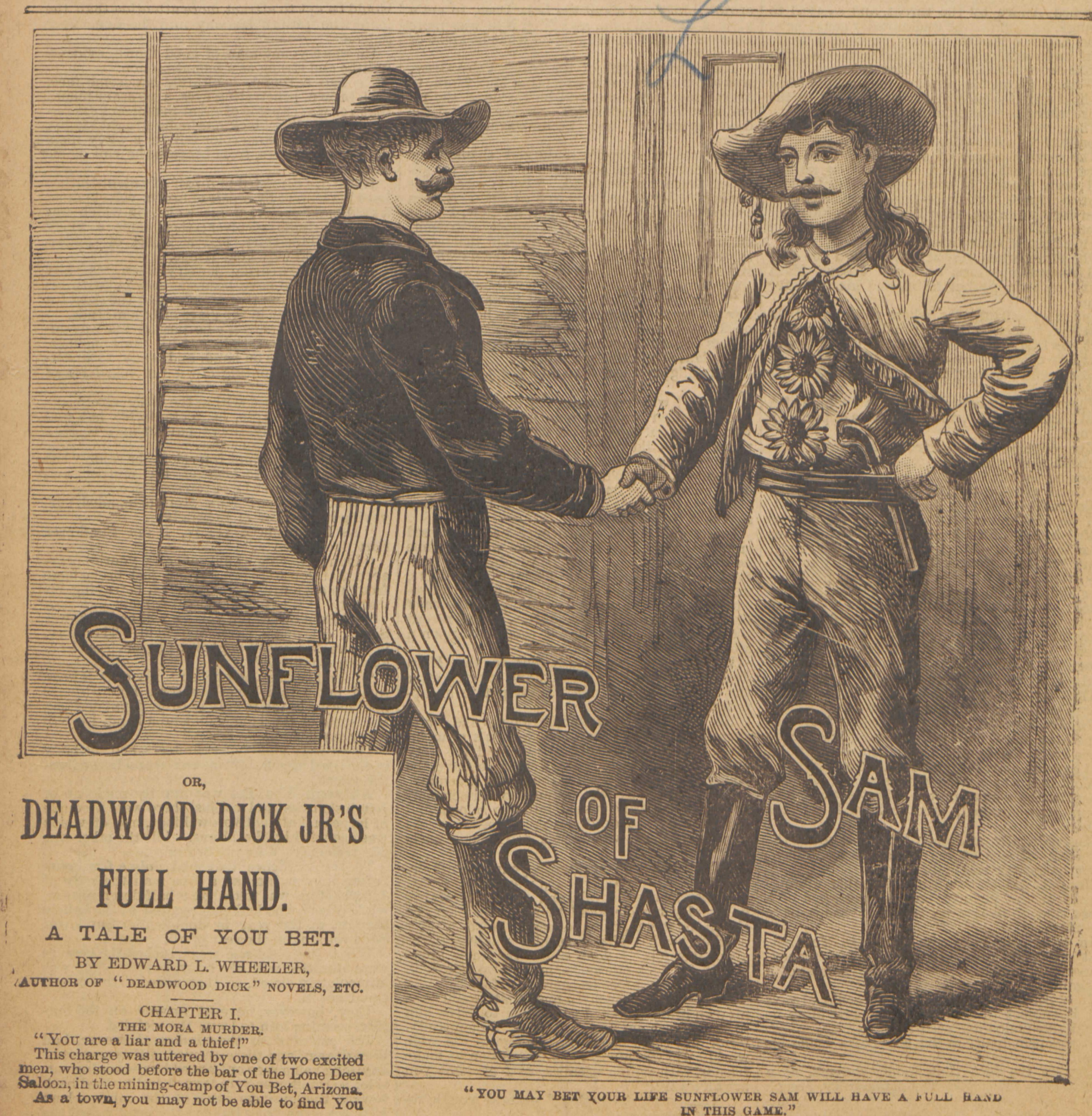
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"YOU MAY BET YOUR LIFE SUNFLOWER SAM WILL HAVE A FULL HAND IN THIS GAME."

Bet indicated on the map, for the place rejoiced in another name, which the fastidious were wont to use instead of the original rough-and-ready title.

But of the camp itself, more anon.

The two men referred to as standing before the bar of the Lone Deer, were aged respectively about forty-four and forty-five years, and looked somewhat alike, inasmuch as both were about of the same stature, dressed in similar garb, and each possessed a well-kept brown beard.

It was the younger man who had uttered the insulting charge, and his face was flushed red from the combined effects of anger and strong

drink.

The other man appeared to be somewhat angered, too, and his eyes flashed resentfully at the

accusation.

"Augustin Andre, I'll make you retract those words, if I die for it!" he cried, hotly, "so take them back at once, if you would save yourself trouble."

"I take nothing back, Joe Mora, nor do I fear you, as I will prove, by repeating the charge that you are both a liar and a thief!" Andre

sneered.

With a cry of rage, Mora leaped forward and clutched Andre by the throat, and essayed to strangle him, which he undoubtedly could have done, had not Andre quickly wrested a knife from its sheath upon his hip, and with one quick stroke drove it to the hilt in Mora's breast.

With a groan the stricken man relinquished his hold upon his enemy's throat, and fell to the floor, where he expired almost instantly.

Then, with a heartless laugh, Andre turned upon his heel, and walked from the saloon.

The circumstances of this cold-blooded act were somewhat peculiar, inasmuch as no one had been present in the room besides the two men, to witness the crime—the bartender having been engaged in the cellar in tapping a barrel of liquor, and both Andre and Mora having entered during his temporary absence.

Therefore, when the bartender heard the fall, and rushed up-stairs, he found Joseph Mora weltering in a pool of blood, and his murderer

gone.

Quickly the bartender, whose name was Nicholas Nye, rushed to the door and threw it open. It was late at night, and a dark night, too, so

that Nye could not see a dozen yards away. Nor could he hear any sounds of retreating

footsteps. There was only here and there a twinkle of a light about the camp, and no one was apparently

abroad. Nye returned to the bar-room, and stood for a

moment, gazing in horror, at the corpse and the sickening pool of blood.

"Good gracious! This beats the Dutch!" he soliloquized. "Here's Joe Mora been knifed, and no one knows who did it. It can't be he knifed himself, for I know I heard two persons enter the saloon, while I was in the cellar, and I heard 'em talk, though I was too busy to pay any attention to what they were saying. Whoever did the job took care to get out mighty quick; and, more than that, the men were only in the room a few minutes ere I heard the fall. They must have been quarreling when they entered. Who can have did the deed-that's the question? I do not know a man in You Bet who held a grudge against Joe Mora."

Thus soliloquized konest Nick Nye, as he stared at the rigid figure upon the floor.

Finally, however, he awoke to the fact that something must be done, and so rushed once more from the Lone Deer to the nearest cabin, and gave an alarm—then to other dwellings.

You Bet was not so extensive a place but what, in the course of ten minutes, the whole camp was aroused, and collected at the saloon.

And naturally, as Joseph Mora was one of the foremost citizens of the place, the excitement

over the murder ran high.

Not only did he own some valuable miningclaims in the vicinity, but was possessed of a large sum of money, on which he was wont to speculate.

In other words, he was known in You Bet, and adjacent mining-districts, as a moneylender, and a man who never lost the best of a bargain.

If a person needed money, he could always get it, subject to a big "shave," providing he

could give undoubted security. It was principally in this way Mora made his

wealth.

Despite the fact that money-shavers, as a rule, secure the dislike of a community, Joseph Mora was thought well of in You Bet, for, outgide of his business, he was liberal and unselfish,

and mingled freely with all classes, and had a pleasant word for everybody.

Hence the surprise at his being stricken down by the hand of an unknown assassin.

He had a family, consisting of his wife, an adopted daughter named Bly Barron, and a

nephew named Max Mora. The adopted daughter was one of the sweetest and prettiest maidens in all Arizona's sunny clime—just seventeen, and ripening into a glo-

rious young womanhood. She was a sunny-haired creature, with pleasant features, hazel eyes, and a prettily-rounded, petite figure; her manners were refined and charming, and her conversational powers born of keen intellect, and a fine education.

Max Mora was rather a dashing and handsome young man, but, unfortunately, was both lazy and dissolute in his habits, and there seemed no likelihood that he would ever "set the world on fire."

Despite these facts he had always appeared to be a favorite with his uncle, who, while not exactly taking him into his business, kept him supplied with money, the money always going for drink or games.

The excitement became intense, as the people crowded into and about the Lone Deer, to get a view of the dead man, and Nick Nye was more than once called upon to relate what he knew of the murder.

The deputy-sheriff of the camp, Peleg Gray, was about the last one, excepting Max Mora, to arrive upon the scene, and he reviewed the remains with moisture in his eyes, for he and the dead speculator had been warm personal friends.

"Boyees, this hyer's a durned shame!" he cried, taking off his hat, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "Some meen cuss hes knifed Joe Mora, who war as squar' a man as ever tuk his whisky straight, an' now, I want ter know who did it? Ef ther galoot is present, let him step for'a'd, an' acknowledge ther corn, as there will be no use o' his tryin' ter screen hisself o' ther crime, fer et's an old sayin', an' truer than gunpowder, that 'murder will out!'

"Ther man as stuck a knife inter Joe Mora hev got ter swing, and I'm goin' ter hev a hand on ther rope that yanks him!"

This declaration was greeted with a murmur of applause from the bystanders.

"It's mighty queer who did the job," said a

miner.

"Queer! why on course it's queer!" snorted Gray. "Ther' wasn't a man in ther camp but what were on good terms wi' Mora. Ain't I right, boys?—did ye ever hear a galoot say as he had anything ag'in' him? Ef ye did, jest name ther galoot, and we'll investigate ther matter, at once, an' don't ye fergit it!"

But, no one made answer, except by negative

shakes of their heads.

If any one in the crowd ever had expressed enmity toward Joseph Mora, now was the time he would be the least inclined to admit the fact, for Peleg Gray was a sort of terror to evil doers, in and around You Bet, as he was a firm advocate of lynch law, was a dead shot, and the chief of the local Vigilance Committee, whose record showed that they had visited vengeance upon a score or more of lawbreakers.

Word had already been sent to the Mora dwelling, to warn the family, and shortly after the deputy's arrival, Max Mora put in an appearance.

He was tall, dark-complexioned, and quite prepossessing of appearance, with his graceful black mustache and curling hair, and his jetty eyes, whose magnetic gaze seemed to have the power to pierce a person through and through.

"Good Heaven! who committed this crime?" he demanded, as he rushed into the saloon, and knelt beside the dead uncle. "Speak, quick! some one, tell me who struck down poor uncle

"That's what no one knows, young man!" declared Peleg. "Nick, thar, war down cellar, an' when he heerd a fall, and rushed up-stairs, he found yer uncle layin' thar, dead, an no one else in the saloon, or to be seen or heerd, in ther neighborhood. Thar's suthin' mighty queer about ther job. I don't allow yer uncle killed hisself, fer Nick allows he heerd two voices in ther bar-room, afore he heerd ther fall!"

"No! Uncle was not a man that would take his own life, for he had no trouble to drive him to such a rash act," Max replied, thoughtfully. "Nor do I think he had an enemy, in the wide world. He was always of a disposition to make friends, rather than enemies, as I presume you

are all aware!" "Yas, ye'r' right, thar," several voices responded in a chorus.

"Maybe some cuss knifed him, ter git his

wallybles!" suggested a miner.

"If so, they didn't take his diamond pin," Max replied, as he proceeded to search the pockets of the dead man. "No, his wallet is here, and contains money. Let me see"-and he counted over the contents—"here is a thousand dollars, even. That's more than he usually carried about his person.

"No, boys, this foul murder was not commit ted for money. It was done for a revengeful and vicious purpose, and I will take the responsibility upon myself of offering this thousand dollars as a reward to the man or men, who hunt down the murderer of my uncle!"

"Then, stranger, providing there ain't any exorbitant entrance fee, I allow you can count me in for the race—me ther sunny-natured Sunflower Samuel, from soaring Shasta!" cried a sportive-looking individual as he elbowed his way into the crowded bar-room.

THE SHASTA DETECTIVE. STRANGERS were won't to arrive in You Bet, at all hours of the day and night, and by various ways of transportation; but few came who would be apt to attract more attention than the

Saloon. He was a young man of good figure, evident-

man who pushed his way into the Lone Deer

ly lithe and strong as a mountain lion.

He had a round, healthful, handsome face, with brown, penetrating eyes, a pleasant mouth that yet was capable of great firmness of expression. A curling black mustache graced his lip, and hair of the same color fell in a wavy mass upon his shoulders, from beneath the rim of his sombrero.

His attire consisted of a pair of patent-leather knee boots, met by a pair of brown-velvet pants; a gold band encircled his waist, in which was thrust a single revolver; then came a finely pleated white shirt, and a jacket of spotless white, bound with gold fringe.

Instead of wearing jewelry upon his shirt front, as would have been in keeping with his make-up, he wore three sunflowers, the size of a silver half-dollar in the place of bosom-studs.

Such was the person who pushed his way into the Lone Deer Saloon, with the announce ment that he was on hand, and ready to undertake the job of hunting down the murderer of Joseph Mora.

As he had paused within the little circle surrounding the corpse, he took off his hat and bowed respectfully, more particularly to Max Mora than to any one else.

"Excuse my abrupt intrusion," he said; "but" I just happened to hear of the murder, and concluded I might be of some service."

"Who are you?" Max Mora demanded, surveying him rather criticisingly.

"As I announced before, I am Sunflower Sam, from Shasta." "Humph! One would judge by your appearance that you were some crank just broke loose

from an asylum!" Mora retorted, betraying his disgust. "What is your real name?" "As Sunflower Sam you see me; as Sunflower Sam I eat, drink, sleep and fight. Therefore,

if you're desircus of engaging my services, I am at your command." "I shall engage no one, sir. My offer is open

to all, but with a hope that some fellow-towns. man may win the reward. Now, deputy, if you and some of the boys will lend a hand, we will carry my dead uncle home."

There were plenty of volunteers, and the body of the dead speculator was raised and borne from the saloon.

Although You Bet was mostly made up of rough shanties and cabins, there were a couple of large and attractive dwellings, one of which was occupied by the Moras, while the other was the residence of Augustin Andre.

To the residence that had only a few hours before known him as a live man the body of Joseph Mora was taken by a half-dozen miners, while others who had congregated at the saloon brought up the rear in double file; Sunflower Sam walking in the rear of all.

When the residence was reached the bearers were admitted with the body, but the door was immediately closed, so that none of the crowd

could get in. They, however, hovered around on the outside, seeming loth to leave the vicinity.

The curtains on the windows, however, had been drawn, and there seemed little prospect of anything being seen or learned by remaining outside; so Sunflower Sam turned and walked back toward the business part of the camp, where were the Lone Deer Saloon, the hotel called the White Bear, and various stores, shops and 'she-

bangs. "Yes, I've arrived just in time to take a hand in investigating this murder case," he soliloquized, as he strode along through the darkness of the starless night, "and at the same time quietly work up the other matter that brought me here. Altogether, I am likely to be kept employed, and that is what I want. If I can run down this murderer, whoever he may be, I fancy I can find use for that thousand dollars'

He had not yet reached the Lone Deer, when he felt a light tap upon the shoulder, and was surprised to find a man walking along by his side—a tall, finely proportioned fellow, clad in miner's habiliments, and the possessor of a handsome face, adorned by a sweeping blonde mustache, and lit up by as handsome a pair of eyes as one would care to gaze into.

reward, without any inconvenience."

"Excuse me, pard," he said, "but I wished to learn if you got any news at the house, yonder —if the boss was really dead. My name is Joe Colby, an' I am his mine boss, and Mora was as dear as a father, to me."

He spoke earnestly, and there was a slight tremor in his voice, which indicated that he

spoke his true feelings. "No, I didn't learn anything at the house, sir," Sam replied, "but you can bet your last trump that your bosses spirit has gone to another sphere, by this time."

"And you're going to try to find out who

committed the murder?" "Well, I rather allow I am!"

"God bless you for that!" Colby said, heartily. "If you succeed in doing that you will confer a life-long obligation upon Mrs. Mora, Bly, and myself."

Who is Bly?" "The adopted daughter of the Moras. She's called Beautiful Bly Barron, more often, however-Barron having been her own mother's name. Bly and I are lovers, you know, only I don't get a chance to court her much, because Mrs. Mora don't like me. Bly loves me, just the same, and so I am satisfied."

"You ought to be happy. A woman's faithful love is a jewel without price. Did Mr. Mora approve of your love for his adopted child?"

"Yes—that is, he never gave me cause to suppose that he disapproved of my attention to Bly; for, had he, he would have said so, without hesitation. He has given me employment, at a good salary, and I believe he liked me full as well as I did him."

Sunflower Sam made no answer for several seconds, appearing to be in deep thought. "Have you any idea who committed this

crime?" he finally asked.

"No, indeed! If I had, I would tell you with-

out waiting for you to ask."

"Nor any knowledge that Mr. Mora had any enemies?" "None, whatever. He allus got along first-

rate with everybody, and I don't know the first person who had anything against him, or owed him a grudge. That's somethin' can't be said of every man."

"You are quite correct, in that. Was Mr.

Mora wealthy?" "You bet! Thar's none in this camp any richer. He owned the Beauty mine, an' besides that, he had a pile of money."

"Where did he keep it?" "I don't know, 'cept it is in the big safe in his

office." "Is his office in his residence?"

"No. It's a shanty he built over yonder near the mouth of the mine. But, there's no danger of anyone's robbing it, for Clem, the little nigger servant, sits up in the office all night, and if any one tries to get in he teches a knob, an' an electric current follows an underground wire, and communicates wi' a bell in the boss's bedroom."

"Ah! I see. By the way, has Bly any other

suitors, besides yourself?"

"Not that she cares a cent for." "Has she got any she don't care a cent for?" "Well, I guess so. There's nigh every man in the camp as likes her. But I reckon the only ones you could exactly call suitors for her hand, are Augustin Andre, an' Max."

"Max? Who's he?" "Oh! he's the nephew o' the boss." "What sort of a chap is he?"

"Well, I haven't got nothing in particular against him, though he is rather jealous of me, because he knows, as does every one else, that Bly is fond of me. But, Max won't make the man like his uncle was, unless he steadies up in his habits."

"He is unsteady, then?"

faro and poker, and frequently gets more liquor aboard, than is good for him."

"And this Andre?"

"Oh! he's the next richest man in You Bet to Joe Mora. He is a sort of a man of leisure, and don't do nothing in particular, tho' it's said he has got piles of money."

After a brief silence, Sunflower Sam went on: "Who will be the one most likely to profit by

Joseph Mora's death?"

"Well, that's pretty hard to tell. There's Max, an' Bly, and the wife, and I don't know which will get the biggest lick. I suppose Mrs. Mora will get something, an' then I wouldn't be surprised if the balance were equally divided up between Bly and Max."

"That is, in case a will has been made?"

" Yes."

"Do you know if a will has been made?"

"No, I do not."

By this time they reached the only hotel in the camp, known as the White Bear, and shook hands, as Colby announced that he had some little distance further to go.

"I hope you'll find the murderer," he said,

earnestly.

"I've nothing in my hands now, but you may bet your life Sunflower Sam will have a full hand in this game."

"And Joe Colby is with you, pard, through thick and thin—don't fergit it!" added the miner

solemnly. "Thanks. You may perhaps be of some use to me, later," Sam replied, and then entered the hotel and went to his room, from which he had been summoned by the alarm of murder.

CHAPTER III.

AN INVITATION TO CALL.

WHEN another day had dawned, the denizens of You Bet were astir and the excitement of the tragedy of the previous night was revived and intensified.

At the Mora residence the grief-stricken family were gathered about the corpse of the murdered speculator, who had been laid out upon a hastily-improvised bier, and both Mrs. Mora and Bly were weeping bitterly, while Max Mora, with tearless eyes, paced the floor, his face expressing no little sorrow.

The trio alone kept a vigil with the dead. Mrs. Mora was a good-sized, middle-aged woman, with rather a hard, cold cast of features, piercing gray eyes, and hair that was silverthreaded.

One's first impression on meeting her would be that she was a woman of strong will, and not of the most amiable temperament; yet her grief seemed to be genuine, as she sat beside her late partner in life and wept.

If anything, Bly seemed the most affected at her foster-father's untimely death; for Mr. Mora had ever been kind and indulgent to her, and she had been his pet and pride.

Early in the morning the neighbors began to drop in, but were not permitted to view the remains—Mrs. Mora and Bly receiving them in another room, while Max left the house to make necessary arrangements for the funeral.

By his orders no miners went to work at the Beauty mine, and many of the employees of the other mining industries of the camp laid off, out of respect for the dead citizen.

During the morning Max and Sunflower Sam met on the steps of the White Bear Hotel, but the former barely noticed the sport with a nod, and passed on.

"The murdered man's nephew is not inclined to be friendly with me, I take it," Sam muttered, as he sauntered into the hotel, having just why, I don't pretend to know. Perhaps time will develop the why it is thusly."

The proprietor of the White Bear was a portly, bald-headed and good-natured fellow known as General Garabaldi Gout, or "The General;" but just whether the man had ever won such a prominent military title, or had adopted it to satisfy a whim, no one in You Bet pretended to know or say.

The General was fond of his "bitters," and was usually more sociable than the average hotel proprietor, always having a jovial greeting for those who patronized his bar.

When Sam entered the hotel he stepped to the bar, ordered some wine, and invited the General to have an eye-opener with him, an invitation that was not refused.

When the drinks had been partaken of, the Sunflower Sport called the General to one side and they were engaged for some time in conversation, after which Sam sought his breakfast, "Well, yes, rather. He don't work, but plays | his face wearing an expression of satisfaction.

"That's one point gained, if I can trust the proprietor of this shebang to keep mum," he muttered, "and I think I can. The old chap seems honest enough, if he has got a red nose!"

For, the end of the General's proboscis was notably like the tinge of the blooming peony. "And, there's my acquaintance of last night, Joe Colby," the sport mused on. "He appears

to be an honest, every-day sort of fellow, with a big heart that has a weak spot in it for Miss Bly Barron. I must see this young lady, and also her foster mother, but not until-"

He finished his breakfast, and once more saun-

tered forth upon the street.

The month was November, but as ever, in sunny Southern Arizona, the weather was warm and delightful, and it was one of the most enjoyable seasons of the year.

You Bet was located in a wide gulch, through which a small silvery stream wound its way, and there were many bits of adjacent landscape pleasing to the eye of a lover of nature, as was this sport from Shasta.

The better part of the forenoon he spent in wandering about the camp, observing what was going on with his keen, intelligent eyes, and listening to snatches of conversation that passed between citizens, who gathered here and there in groups, to discuss the murder, which all seemed to regard as a profound mystery.

So far as the young stranger could ascertain, no one had any theory as to whom the murderer

might be.

·Considerable conjecture also seemed to be afloat as to who would get the major share of Joseph Mora's wealth.

Said one individual:

"Ef Mora left a will, thar's no doubt but what Max an' Bly will share alike, an' ther old woman will get a slice, too. But, ef thar's no will, ther gal won't stand a smell of a show, fer she ain't a blood relation. In that case, the old woman will git a equal share wi' Max, I opine."

"It's my opine," observed an old miner, "that Max'll git ther mine, anyhow, an' et'll be left in sech a way that he can't sell it. Dunno that it's any o' my dorg-meat, but I'd prefer some one else w'u'd git ther Beauty than Max."

"Why?" queried the first speaker. "Fer a good reason. Mebbe ye hev fergot that it was Max who sed, one night in ther Lone Deer, when Mike Berry were a-cussin' at Boss Harkley of Carterville, fer employin' Chinese ter work in his mines—et were Max who allowed thet ef he war the owner of a mine he should consider et his privelege ter git his hands as cheap as he could, no matter who or what they were."

"Yas. But yer don't allow he'd hev ther neck ter fetch any Chinese cusses heer ter You Bet?"

"'Twouldn't s'prise me a bit."

"An' why? He surely wouldn't go back on ther boys as has allus treated him white?"

"Ther's no tellin'. Yer can't allers tell by ther ears of a muel how hard et ken kick. Now, yer know Boss Harkley o' Carterville, can't neither read ner write!" "What's that got ter do wi' You Bet?"

"Waal, mebbe nuthin', but, ag'in, mebbe a right peart smart heap." "Bah! Yer don't know what ye'r' talkin'

about."

"Yas I do. I've hearn et hinted, tho' I never said nothin' 'bout it, thet Max kinder figgered in, an' helped Harkley ter git them Chinermen ter Carterville. Mebbe 'tain't so, but I'd jest as lief see some one else git ther Beauty, as Max, an' don't yer fergit it."

"Waal, ther's one thing sart'in-ther' would be ructions raised ef er pig-tail gerloot war ever returned from a before-breakfast stroll. "Just | ter set foot inter You Bet!" the other assumed grimly.

Sunflower Sam had listened to this dialogue

with interest. "It would make matters lively if Chinamen

were to come," he mused as he moved away. During the forenoon he had chats with differ-

ent parties, but was unable to elicit any opinion as to the identity of the assassin.

Nick Nye, of the Lone Deer, was forced to tell over and over again what little he knew about the tragedy, until he got so tired of it, that he threatened to shoot the next man who bothered him with an inquiry.

From all the Man from Shasta could learn, the murderer had withdrawn the knife from the bosom of his victim, and probably had taken it with him.

Several times during the forenoon, Sam was tempted to make a call at the Mora residence. but on second thought, changed his mind, and concluded to give the afflicted family a chance to assuage their first grief over the loss of him

who, from all accounts, must have been one of nature's noblemen, and very dear to them.

Where he was to begin at, in order to ferret out the author of the crime, was a poser to the detective, for there was apparently not the slightest clew to work on.

Usually, after the commission of a crime, some person, be he even the most insignificant, has some theory or suspicion to advance that a shrewd detective can grasp at, and work out to either a successful or unsuccessful climax; but these people of You Bet were apparently as deeply in the dark, and non-theoretical, as was Eunflower Sam himself.

Just before noon, a small boy approached him as he stood in front of the hotel, and after staring wonderingly at him for a moment, tendered him a crumpled slip of paper.

Sam took it, and saw it contained writing in a scrawling hand, which he finally made out to read as follows:

" MR. BUNFLOWER SAM:-

"I would respectfully request that you grant me an interview at my residence at your earliest convenience. Nearly any one can direct you to where I l''s.

Respectfully,

Augustin Andre."

CHAPTER IV.

A MOTHER'S FEARS.

As may be supposed, the Flower from Shasta felt no little surprise at the message, coming as it did from a person he had never seen, and had heard of but once.

"It must be I am getting suddenly popular," he mused, as he put the note in his pocket, and looked for the boy, who had already skurried away. "I suppose I shall have to accommodate this Mr. Augustin Andre with a call, or he will feel slighted."

So after a few minutes he inquired his way to the Andre residence, which was very much like that occupied by the Moras, and was admitted and shown into the parlor by a servant.

Here were seated two persons—Augustin Andre, tall, portly and rather haughty looking, well dressed, and with his hair and beard carefully brushed out; and a young woman of two-pr-three-and-twenty.

She was creamy-complexioned, of good figure, with a pleasant mouth, sparkling blue eyes, and a wealth of sunny hair, and her personal beauty combined with her elaborate toilet, made her an object most charming to gaze upon.

Andre immediately arose upon the entrance of Sunflower Sam, and advanced with extended

"You are Sunflower Sam, the detective, I believe," he said, cordially. "I am Augustin Andre, and this is my sister, Queenie. Pray be seated, sir."

Sam acknowledged the introduction, grace-fully, and then accepted the proffered seat, near to which Andre drew his own chair.

"Yes, I am glad you came," Andre repeated, "for I wanted to see you about this shocking murder affair, and having a little twinge of the gout this morning, I did not feel like getting away from the house. Distressing affair, isn't it?"

"I suppose it is, although I never had it!" Sam replied, composedly.

"No, no! I do not mean the gout—I mean this mysterious murder."

"Oh! Yes, it is a very sad affair."

"Have you formed any opinion as to who may have committed the murder?"
"Not as yet. I have had no time, in particu-

lar, to devote to investigation."
You propose to give the case your earnest

"Very likely, if I get any clew to work on."
"I am glad to hear it, and sincerely hope you will succeed in running down the dastardly wrotch. If you do I'll add another thousand

you will succeed in running down the dastardly wretch. If you do, I'll add another thousand dollars to the offer of Max Mora. Joe Mora was a dear friend of mine, and my grief at his assassination is little less than that of those who are related to him."

"Indeed? Well, I shall do what I can to unravel the mystery certainly. I suppose you have no idea as to the identity of the criminal?"

"I would not want to say just now until I watch matters a little, for you see it would be unjust, to set any mere suspicion afloat. I will let you figure at the case awhile, before I vent my theory, as I may be entirely off the track. There's one thing, however: the death of Joseph Mora is going to create a sensation that will startle and astound everybody—not just yet, maybe, but as soon as his last will is produced and read."

"In what way?"

"I cannot tell you, just now, but you will find out, in due time. It's a profound secret, and when the exposure is made, You Bet will be shaken to its center, and disgrace will fall upon one whose name should never have borne it."

"Do you refer to Bly Barron?"

"I mention no names. You go on with your work and do the best you can, and, rest assured, I will lend you any assistance in my power, pecuniary, or otherwise."

"Thanks. I presume I shall catch on to some clew, before long. Do you think Mr. Mora left a will behind him?"

"Without a doubt. He was too shrewd a business man, not to provide for such things as accidents and the uncertainties of life. Indeed, it was only about a month since that he as good as intimated to me that he had made provision for the future."

"The will, then, would most naturally be in his safe?"

his safe?"

"Yes."
"Did any one have access to the safe but himself?"

"I am not prepared to say for a certainty, but presume not."
"Has he no blood relatives here, except his

"Has he no blood relatives here, except his wife and nephew?" "None living, but them, I understand."

"Then his wealth will probably be divided up between Mrs. Mora, Bly and Max?"

"Possibly. As I observed before, the chances are large that the reading of the will will create a sensation full greater than the murder. However, the matter of the tragedy and that of the will are two different things, and have no connection. It is the murderer we want to find first, and the will can attend to itself."

After a further short conversation, Sunflower Sam took his departure.

Before leaving, he was invited to call again and as often as convenient, both by Andre, and

his charming sister, Queenie.

He went back to the hotel, and spent an hour or two in reflection; then, ordered his horse, and took a gallop up the gulch, attracting no little attention, as he dashed through the camp.

Max Mora and Bly Barron stood by a front window, looking out upon the street, as he dashed by, and he raised his hat, gallantly, and inclined his head.

"Who was that fellow, Max?" Bly asked, raising her tear-reddened eyes to the face of her cousin-by-adoption. "What a singular and yet handsome looking young man. Why does he so oddly decorate himself with sunflowers?"

"Because he's a crank—to the best of my notion—and calls himself Sunflower Sam, from Shasta. He evidently came here to make a splurge, and arriving shortly after poor uncle's death, offered me his services as a detective. I gave him no encouragement, and I trust you will not, should he seek to make himself known to you. There's no telling who or what he is, and it's best to be on the safe side, and give him a wide berth."

"He did not look like a bad person, Max, but those sunflowers gave him such an odd appearance. It might be well to try him. There is no telling but what he might find out who killed poor papa."

"Nonsense!" Max said, impatiently. "He is some adventurer who intends to fish for the reward I offered, and would be just as apt to charge some reputable citizen with the crime as the real party. So take care to have nothing to say to him, as you know I would not want to see you compromise yourself, my little Bly."

And he attempted to put his arm about her waist—an act she prevented by drawing away. "Don't, Max. You know you ought not. Ex-

cuse me, now. I must go and see if mamma wants anything. She takes poor papa's death very hard."

And she flitted away, leaving Max to stare out of the window and bite his lip with vexation. "Confound it," he muttered; "it seems as if I never can make any headway with her, and it's all on account of that Joe Colby, too. If he were out of the way the coast would be clear to me, for Bly despises Gus Andre, despite his suave ways and reputed riches.

"And, on the other hand, there's the queenly Queenie, who would cut off her little finger if she thought it would please me. But, somehow, she is not to my taste. She's affected, and I fancy a little deceitful, and we wouldn't agree for any length of time. Bly is the one I want, and Bly

In the meantime, Bly had gone up-stairs to the room of Mrs. Mora, where she found that lady seated in an easy-chair, with her face buried in her hands.

She was not weeping, but appeared to shut out some unwelcome thought or association.

"Don't grieve so, mamma," Bly said, gently, as she went and knelt before her, and pulled the hands from her face. "We have all got to die, some time, and we know papa was such a good man that death to him had no terrors."

"True, my child, true, but I shall miss him very much, and you will, too, for he was always even kinder to you than I. But, though I deeply mourn his loss, it is not altogether that—that troubles me."

"Why, what do you mean, mamma? What else is there that troubles you?"

"I don't know! I can't tell you, but it is something—something. I am impressed with a foreboding that something dreadful is going to happen to us, or to me at least. I cannot tell in what way, shape or form it will come, but I am deeply impressed with the idea that we are ap-

proaching a crisis in our lives, when, mayhap, we shall be separated, or even worse, turned out of house and home!"

"Why, mamma, how strangely you do talk!"

"Nor can I scarcely understand myself, more than that I cannot shake off this terrible fore-boding of coming trouble. We do not even know what disposition Joseph has made of his property—whether he left a will or not. If he did leave a will, I am afraid he willed his all to Max, for he never considered it a woman's place to meddle in business matters, and—and—"

"But, mamma, surely Max would not turn us out of doors, were he the sole heir!"

"There's no telling, my dear. He ain't like Joseph—no, he ain't like Joseph. Mebbe he wouldn't exactly turn us out of doors, after all we have done for him, but if he didn't, he would most likely make terms by which we could not stay."

"Why, how do you mean? Max surely would not deal with us as he would with utter stran-

gers!"

"That's where you don't know him, my dear—that's where you are yet childish, and unaccustomed to the world and its worldliness Max may be all right now, but, were he to come into Joseph's fortune, I fear there would be a change, and we would be the ones to suffer by it—you, most especially."

Bly turned pale, as a thought flashed across

her mind.

"Mamma—mamma, you do not mean that—"
"Yes, I mean that were Max Mora to come into power, you would have to marry him, or we would be turned out upon the world, the same as beggars!"

"No, no, no, mamma! never will it come to that, for you know Joe—Mr. Colby—is young and strong, and has some money laid aside, and he would never see us come to want!" Bly cried, her eyes radiant with hope and the joy of love. "Joe will not go back on us, even though all the world turns against us."

CHAPTER V.

DICK BAGS A LIVE YANKHE.

"SAY, hello, there! Hold up!"
"Hello, yourself! Who aire ye, where aire ye, an' what in darnation do yer want?"

The query was uttered by a lone pedestrian, who had been trudging along the gulch-bottom in the direction of You Bet, but was yet several miles from that flourishing camp.

He paused at the invitation to hold up, and gazed around him inquiringly.

At first he could see no signs of his accoster, but he finally felt a tap in the small of the back, and wheeling with a startled exclamation, beheld a masked man at his side.

The pedestrian was a tall, lank and lean individual, with a lantern-jawed, cadaverous countenance, and looked as if he had not had enough to eat for several months.

His eyes were light and almost expressionless, his mouth large and puckered in at the corners, his cheeks hollow, and his hair long, frowsy, and of a tow color, while a few straggling hairs grew at the top of his chin.

He was rigged out in stogy boots, a pair of pants, both short-waisted and short-legged, a vest that had once been white, but was now stained and unsightly, and a swallow-tailed broadcloth that no doubt had done service for his grandfather. His neck was bare down to the vest, and it appeared as if he was not the possessor of that essential commodity, a shirt.

Surmounting his tow-colored locks, was a battered-up plug hat, two sizes too small for him. If ever there was a "Reuben," this chap was

the original, or else an electrotype.

The masked man whom he confronted was a

fellow of good physique, clad in top-boots, a suit of somber black, and a slouch hat of the same color.

A wealth of brown hair fell upon his shoulders, and the black mask that covered the upper portion of his face, left a graceful mustache exposed to view.

Although his dark attire and mask gave him a somber and ogreish appearance, there was something dashing and graceful about him.

His right grasped a handsome revolver, which was the only visible weapon he carried. "Great Jemima!" ejaculated the lank man,

as be beheld this real apparition. "Who be you, an' what d'ye want?

"I am a knight of the trail, placed here to intercept lone voyageurs, and guide them on the right route to You Bet."

"Oh! ye be, eh? Waal, neow, that's kinder mice, too. What's yer name?"

"My name? Why, my name's Deadwood Dick, Junior, and I'm a daisy!"

"You don't say! Yer can't be much gud, then, for I'll swow my old dad has had more trouble than a little ter keep the daisies off'm his farm, down in Connecticut. Guess you don't know me, hey?—so I shall introduce myself. I'm Uriaher Opedyke, son of Mehetible an Absalom Opedyke, who live at Grubville, not fur from West Haven, Connecticut, you see. Don't s'pose yer ever see'd dad an' mam?"

"No! I believe I never had that honor." "Waal, ye see, dad used ter farm et, but he's got sorter 'bove that now'days, an' hev moved inter Grubville, an' I do tell you, the old folks do put on the style!

"I should suppose so, from the way they dress their child!" Deadwood Dick observed,

dryly. "Oh! yer needn't cast no 'sinywations ag'in' my togs," Uriah spoke up, quickly, "for I've got better 'uns to hum. I'm travelin' incognertoe neow, yer know."

"Oh! is that it?"

"You bet! Yer see, the case was like this: I've bin sorter sparkin' up to a New Haven gal, named Peggy Prim, fer the last ten year or more, an' et were 'bout as good as agreed thet we were to git hitched, as soon as I war thirty, 'cause dad an' mam allowed I wasn't fit fer married life till I begun ter mature.

"Peggy she war sum six year older than me, an' she war a strong-willed gal, an' she finally sed she wasn't goin' ter wait no longer, an' I'd got ter marry her tew once. This kinder skeart me, an' when I come ter luk around me an' see how many other younger an' purtier gals thar war for the askin', an' how sallow an' wrinkled Peggy war gettin', I made up not ter marry her at all, an' I told her so."

"Well? I suppose she got mad then?" "Mad? Waal, I should flip-flop! She got as | mad an' sassy as a gander what's guardin' a settin' goose, an' swore by a stack o' Bibles higher'n Deacon Overhiser's church, that she'd see me fer britches of promise. Jest think o' that, will ye? Wasn't et the durnednationest scrape ye ever heerd tell on?"

"Very bad, indeed, for a man of your posi-

tion."

"Wal, dad an' mam got skeart, an' so they give me some money, an' I skinned out o' Grubville an' come West. 'Tain't no use, tho'-no sorter use. Peggy has got money, an' she is searchin' high an' low for me. Gosh-all-fishhooks! If she ever ketches me there'll be fun, though, an' my hair will ketch it! Hain't seen anything of her round these parts, hev ye?"

"Not that I know of. I should not recognize the estimable lady if I were to meet her, very

likely."

"Mebbe not. But ef ye ever war ter see her, you'd never fergit her! Heer's her picture!" He drew a photograph from his pocket, and

handed it to Deadwood Dick, Jr.

It was decidedly the picture of an old maid, although by no means a bad-looking one. It was a bust photo, and the way in which the original wore her hair was the principal cause of her old-maidish appearance, for in face she looked younger than the recreant Uriah.

Deadwood Dick, Junior, studied the face for several minutes, as if trying to recall some one

of whom it reminded him.

"I have seen some one this picture resembles," he said, returning the card to the Easterner, "but do not remember just now."

"Oh! mebbe you've met Peggy's cousin. He

aire somewhere up in this region."

"What is his name?" "Augustin Andre."

"The deuce you say! So your inamorata is the cousin of Augustin Andre?"

"She aire—you bet! D'ye know him?"

"I have seen him."

"Whar does he live?" "In You Bet!"

"Jest the very place I was aimin' fer, by gosh! I dunno now whether I better go thar or not, for Peggy might be thar."

"Guess you better not go!" Dick said, dryly, as he cocked his revolver. "You had better come right along with me." "With you? What fer?"

And Uriah began to look alarmed.

"Just for fun. I am desirous of getting some points about Augustin Andre, and as luck would have it, you are the very man to give them to me. So come along to my cabin and give me the information, or I'll blow the whole top of your tow head off-do you hear?"

"Gosh all fish-hooks! don't shoot! I'll tell you all I know!" Uriah replied, nervously.

"Then come along. Don't attempt to escape, or you are a dead man!"

With this order, Dick led the boy back up the gulch, turning at length and entering a transverse ravine, which they followed until they came to a cavern, which they entered.

The only furniture was a couple of rudely constructed stools, and when Dick and his prisoner were seated upon these, the former said:

"Now, then, I'm going to put you some questions, and I want direct and correct answers to them. By thus accommodating me, you will save your life, for I'll drop you if you don't do as I require."

"Ye wouldn't really shoot a feller, w'u'd ye?

Why, that would be murder."

"Bah! what of that? We knights of the road think nothin' of killing three or four men every day, just to keep our hand in. Now, first, have you ever seen this Augustin Andre?"

"Laws, yes! He used to live in New Haven,

an' drive a milk wagon." "How long ago was this?"

"Oh! bout five years. He had a fuss wi' the Prims, who he lived with, an' he an' Sis left fer the West. Last I heerd of 'em, they were up in this very region."

"What was the nature of the fuss Augustin Andre had with the Prim family, and who is

"Sis is the sister of Gus, an' the row betwixt do et onless the old man would give him a thousan'. So they had a fuss, an' Gus skinned out on his own hook. I allow that was w'ot made Peggy kinder freeze on to me so hard, afterward,"

"This happened five years ago?"

"Has Peggy changed since then?" "Considerable. She were a right peart lookin' gal, them times."

"How many were there of the Prims?" "Only the dad, mam, an' Peg." "Who were Andre's other relatives?"

"He hadn't any, as I know of." Dick hesitated a few minutes, before plying any other questions; he seemed to be turning some matter carefully over in his mind.

"Did Andre know you?" he finally asked. "Yas. I uster throw rotten apples at him, when he'd drive by our house, in his fancy carriage."

"He was wealthy, then, I take it?" "Well, yes, sorter. He used to make a heap

bettin' on hoss-races."

"What was his character when he left the East? Was there any criminal charges against bim?"

"Well, yes. Afore he skinned out, he forged ole Prim's name tew a note an' sold the note. Then, he skipped."

"What was the amount the note was drawn

"Five hundred dollars!"

"Drawn payable to Andre?"

"What was Prim's front name?"

"Jake." "And his wife's?"

"And Andre's sister's?"

"Lucy."

"Jane Ann."

Dick made a memorandum of these replies on

a slip of paper. Then he asked for, and received Peggy Prim's photograph, and rising quickly left the cabin,

closing the heavy door after him. Suspicioning that all was not right, Uriah arose and tried to open the door, but found him

self unable to do so. It was fastened on the outside. There was no window in the cabin.

He was a prisoner!

CHAPTER VI.

A SURPRISE ALL AROUND.

THE next morning but one after the murder, the remains of Joseph Mora were laid away to rest, and it being the only real funeral the camp had ever known, it was attended nearly by every man woman and child in the camp.

The services were conducted at the house, and afterward, the people were allowed to pass in single file past the coffin to view the

body.

A pretty spot had been selected, near the

house, for the burial-place.

The excitement over the murder was unabated, and was a subject of discussion on every hand. Nobody appeared to have formed any opinion, as to who the assassin was.

Sunflower Sam, in his movements about the place, was regarded with much interest and curiosity, for a large share of the people apparently looked to him for a solution of the mys-

But, Sam had not made this solution, yet, and did not seem in any particular hurry to do so, for he spent his time in leisurely walking about the camp, or now and then playing a friendly game of cards, at the "Colchester," the

only gaming parlor in the camp. If he had made any discoveries he did not tell of them to others, and his apparent indifference rather puzzled and disappointed the peo-

The afternoon after the funeral, the denizens of the camp were very curious, for it was supposed that, if Joseph Mora had made a will it would be produced at once; hence, the little office near the mouth of the Beauty mine, was closely watched by a crowd of people.

Sunflower Sam was somewhat curious, himself, about the matter, and kept an eye on the office, determined to be among the first to know how Mora's wealth was to be disposed of.

Toward mid-afternoon, three persons left the Mora dwelling and approached the office.

The three, of course, were Mrs. Mora, Bly and Max.

When the office was reached, Max addressed

those who crowded around. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "we pro-Gus and the Prims was because old man Prim pose to make an effort to open my uncle's wanted Gus ter marry Peggy, an' Gus wouldn't | safe, in order to ascertain if he left a will, or not. When the will is found, if there is any, it shall be read to you. Therefore, I trust you will forbear from intruding on our privacy."

> This was a polite hint for every one to keep out of the office, except those immediately concerned, and it was so accepted, only Max and his two companions entering.

> The safe was a large affair, which Joseph Mora had had shipped from the East, of course at heavy expense, and much trouble in its trans-

> It was over six feet high, fire and burglarproof, and equipped with a combination lock. Drawing a stool near to the safe, young Mora

> sat down, and began to experiment with the silver-plated knob. He had often watched his uncle unlock the

safe, and he flattered himself that it would not take him long to unravel the mysteries of the combination. But, after vain attempts lasting fully a quarter of an hour, his patience gave out, and he let

something drop, suspiciously like an oath. "It can't be done!" he cried. "The only way to get into the safe, is to blow it open, for my uncle never gave any one the key of the combination. Some use a drill, and some use giant powder in such circumstances."

"That's hardly worth while!" spoke up Sunflower Sam, who stood near the doorway. "If you will permit me, I think I can open the safe. without resorting to powder."

" How?"

"Simply by manipulating the knob."

"Bosh! You're wonderfully smart, no doubt, but you'd better not set yourself up too high, or some one may pull you down a peg!" sneered Max.

"If they do try it they'll always find me at home, and the latch-string out!" Sam replied, decisively.

"Why, Max, let the gentleman try to unlock the safe. Perhaps he can do it!" spoke up Bly,

eagerly. "There's no telling." "Oh! he can try if he wants to, but I know he can't do it!" Max growled, doggedly, as he arose from the stool. "So come ahead, Mr. Sunflower Dude, if you can accomplish such wonders!"

Sam paid no attention to the insult, but entering the office, took the seat Max had just with

cated.

"I am not sure I can unravel the combination," he said, "but I will try."

He experimented several minutes, but with no

success. "My, oh! Why don't you open it?" cried Max, with a sarcastic laugh. "It always does me good to see a smarty get stuck." "Oh! does it?" retorted Sam. "Well, sonny,

I am not stuck yet. See?"

And as he uttered the interrogatory, he swung pen the ponderous outer door of the safe, after which it was but the work of a second to open the inner door.

A cry of astonishment escaped those who could crowd near enough to the door to note the detective's success.

Sam smilingly arose, and turned to Mrs.

Mora. "The safe is open, madam," he said, "and I suppose to you belongs the right to examine its

contents." Max Mora had been on the point of stepping forward to do this, but Sam's words caused him to hold aloof, and bite his nether lip with vexa-

Mrs. Mora and Bly went to the safe, and proceeded to examine the contents.

"Here it is!" Mrs. Mora said, a few minutes later, holding up a legal looking document.

"It says upon it, 'Last Will and Testament of Joseph Mora,' and is dated November 1st. Here, sir, will you kindly read it aloud, out of doors, so that all can hear it?" and she tendered the document to Sam.

"I shall be happy to accommodate you," the Man from Shasta replied. "Please step out-

side."

In a couple of minutes Sam was mounted upon a bowlder, just outside the shanty, while Mrs. Mora, Bly, Max and the crowd gathered around. Among the crowd stood Augustin Andre, looking as serene and stately as though he were not

the perpetrator of a single crime. When the crowd had become quiet and atten-

tive, Sam opened the document, and proceeded to peruse it, before announcing its contents. As he read what was written, his face betrayed the keen surprise he felt, and he gazed at Mrs.

Mora both in astonishment and pity. Their gaze met, and she turned pale, for she evidently apprehended that the will contained

no good news for her. "Mrs. More," Sam said, "I have to inform you that this document makes a most remarkable disclosure, which I presume you would not care to have made public. If you wish, there-

fore, I will not read the will in public." "I demand that the will be read in public!" cried Max. "I am a natural heir, and have a

word to say about the matter!"

"I am sure I do not know of any reason why the will should not be read in public!" Mrs. Mora said, faintly. "There should be nothing in it I would not care to have known."

"The disclosure made in the will personally concerns you, ma'am, and I cannot believe it true, little as I know of you. However, if you say so, I will read the will, in public, for it's your matter, and not mine,"

"Go on!" Mrs. Mora faltered. "God knows I have always led a Christian life, and if I am wrongfully accused of anything, I am not to

blame." "I demand, in the interests of justice, that the contents of that document be made public!" Augustin Andre said, stepping forward. "1 have long known the secret that will discloses, but have kept silent, and now, I judge, Joseph Mora has acted honorably, as he promised to do, although I did not know that he had left a will." Sunflower Sam gave the man a keen glance,

and then referred to the codicil. "Well," he began, "although it is an un-

pleasant thing to do, I will read the paper now

in my hands. Here is what is written: ""Being in good general health, and of sound mind' but not knowing what moment I may be called away from this life, I, Joseph C. Mora, do hereby will. bequeath and devise the sum of my earthly possessions

in the following manner, to wit: "To my nephew, Maximilian Mora, I have left the property known as the Beauty mine, situate in the town of You Bet, Arizona, together with all the plant and appurtenances for working the same, said mine not to be sold, but to be donated for charitable purposes, in event of said Maximilian Mora's death, by a committee of business citizens selected as trus-

tees and executors by the law. "'All the balance and residue of my personal property, save and excepting all bonds, mortgages, notes and moneys on hand and due to me, I bequeath to my adopted daughter, Bly Barron, to be used or

disposed of by her. as she may see fit. "To my lawfully wedded wife, Queenie Mora, at present residing with her brother, Augustin Andre I bequeath all such moneys, bonds, mortgages,

notes, and so forth, as may be found in my safe at the time of my death.

"'To the woman, Margaret, who has always been supposed to be my wife, but in reality has been only my servant, I bequeath my kindest regards for the services she has for a long time rendered me, and

for her a fitting burial. "'In witness whereof, I do hereby and hereunto affix my hand and seal, this the first day of November, in the year of our Lord, 18-. " JOSEPH C. MORA.

direct that my heirs, in event of her death, provide

(TYLER GREEN, " Witnesses (MARTIN GUFF.' "

As Sunflower Sam finished reading the will, Mrs. Mora uttered an agonized scream and fell prostrate in a swoon.

The excitement of the next few minutes beg-

gars description. The disclosure made by the will was certainly startling, for no one had ever suspected that Mrs. Mora was not Mrs. Mora, as this document now openly asserted.

By Max Mora's direction she was carried to the Mora residence, while, in all the town, men and women discussed the matter in excited tones.

Some believed that the disclosure was correct, and others denounced it as a fraud and an attempt to ruin an honorable woman.

"Gentlemen!" cried Sunflower Sam, when approached on the matter-"gentlemen, I believe there's something wrong about this matter, and I'm going to try to find out the truth, you bet!"

"There's nothing wrong about it!" retorted Augustin Andre, haughtily. "Joseph Mora was married to my sister, in Tucson, two years ago, but they never lived together, as my sister refused to go to Mora's home because he would not discharge his housekeeper. So the matter has always been kept hushed up, and my sister has received regular sums of money not to let the circumstances of the marriage be known."

"Has your sister a marriage-certificate?" "She has."

"Well, I'll look into the matter, all the same." "You will?"

"Yes, I will; and don't fail to make a note of it!"

"And pray, what business have you got to meddle in other people's affairs? You're making yourself almost too fresh around here, it strikes me!"

"Am I? Well, it don't strike me so. I believe there's something crooked about this whole case, and, as a detective, it becomes my duty to investigate. And investigate it I will, as sure as I am the sportive spotter from soarin' Shasta!"

"Hurrah! for Sunflower Sam, boys!" cried Joe Colby, enthusiastically. "It does look as if there was su'thin' crooked about this business, and I don't believe there is one of you as honestly believes different than that ther woman we've been known as Mrs. Mora is Joe Mora's lawfullywedded wife! Ain't I right?"

There was almost a unanimous murmur of assent from those who were near enough to hear the words of the sturdy young mine boss.

"Yas, ye'r' talkin' sense, Joe!" cried a number. "Ther' ain't no doubt in our minds but what Margaret war Joe Mora's wife, an' thar's some skin game afoot to cheat her, or I'm a sucker."

"You'd better have a care how you fling around such insinuations as that!" cried Andre, furiously. "I'll have you know I'm a gentleman, and I'll have no reflection cast upon my veracity or integrity. I say the woman Margaret never was Mora's wife, and can prove that my sister is his wife, or rather his widow. And I demand the money and papers, in her name."

"The safe is locked, and your demand cannot be satisfied at present!" Sam declared, coolly. "Gents, do you not agree that this matter ought to be more fully inquired into?"

"Ay! ay!" cried a chorus of voices. "Et must be investigated! Ther true widder shall have her rights!"

"That's what I say!" declared Joe Colby, "and I make a motion we appoint Sunflower Sam wi' ther full power ter act as executor, administrator, an' attorney for Joe Mora's estate!"

The shout of approval that went up showed that the motion was carried unanimously.

> CHAPTER VII. WHEN ROGUES FALL OUT.

THE cheering of at least two-thirds of the population of You Bet, in response to Joe Colby's motion to make Sunflower Sam the administrator of the Mora estate, aggravated Augustin Andre not a little, and he cursed

roundly.

"You're a pack of devilish fools!" he roared. "The idea of puttin' a nameless adventurer up to 'minister the affairs of an estate like that of Joe Mora! Why, you are all crazy!"

"Well, I guess not, Mr. Andre!" Joe Colby replied, with almost fierce decision. "Sence Mora is dead, we hain't got no particular ruler of this camp, and the people has got to take matters in their own hands. We are the people, and are that same by a large majority, an' I allow we're 'bout as squar' and honest as ther mill o' time grinds out. So if we are the people, an' by a majority nominate a pilgrim to fill some particular position, that's our bizness and none of yours.

"A foul murder has been committed in this camp, an' no one knows who did it. Along comes this fellow, Sunflower Sam, and offers to try and unravel the mystery, which we allow war quite liberal an' accommodatin' of him.

"Next comes this will business, which tries ter ruin the name and good character of a woman we have always known as the wife of our murdered citizen, and as such respected. Sunflower Sam don't believe but what thar's some crookedness about the matter, and again offers his services, to investigate the business. We, ther people agree ther same way he does, and hev offered to stand by and back him!"

Another cheer from the crowd, with whom Colby evidently was quite popular.

At this juncture, Max Mora came running up. "What's the matter? What's the cause of all this cheering?" he demanded breathlessly.

"Matter enough, as you'll agree!" growled Andre. "This crazy set of fools have taken it into their heads that the will ain't on the square, and that Margaret is really your dead uncle's wife. So they have appointed this æsthetic chap to investigate the matter, and made him administrator of the estate, and so forth. What do you think of it now?"

"Why, this is utter nonsense. The idea of ita nameless tramp as administrator of my uncle's estate! Why, men, have you all lost your

senses?" "No, we have not!" answered Colby. "All we want is fair play, and we're goin' to have it. We've appointed Sunflower Sam to straighten the kinks out of this case, and we're goin' to back him, you bet! We ain't kickin' about how

the mine was left, 'cause we kinder reckoned you'd git that. But, when it comes to hevin' all the money go to some gal as hain't no right to it, an' shet Mrs. Mora out in the cold, we allow it's time to kick, and have the matter investigated. So it's fer thet purpose we've nominated Sunflower Sam, and them as don't like it can lump it!"

"Another thing, my gentle young man!" remarked the Man from Shasta, as he folded his arms across his breast, and surveyed Max Mora sternly, "let me impress upon your mind one thing—be kind o' careless about your references to me-both you and Augustin Andre. I'm neither a scalawag, nor a tramp, I'll have you. know, and for your own good I'd advise you to be more careful when addressing me."

"Bah! Who's afraid of you?" Max growled. "Because you're decorated with sunflowers, no

one fears you, I allow." "Of course!" agreed Augustin Andre. "If you came here thinking you can run the town,

you will be sadly mistaken. I demand the money and bonds that belong to my sister!" "You'll not get it-not now, at any rate. If, after I've made an investigation I conclude to surrender the money to your sister, I will pay it. to her personally. As for you," turning to Max,

"I shall not interfere with your setting the men to work in the mine whenever you please, until I find the mine is not lawfully yours." "Thank you!" Max said, sarcastically. "I am under many obligations to you for your magnanimous kindness! By the way, you will

confer a favor upon me by handing over my uncle's will." "Sorry I can't accommodate you, sir, but I shall retain possession of that document for the

present, while I am investigating the case." "Curse it! there's nothing to investigate, except the mystery of the murder. My uncle's only lawfully wedded wife is Augustin Andre's sister. I have known of this for some time."

"Sorry to doubt you, sir, but I certainly do. However, there is no use of disputing matters until I have a chance to investigate. The safe in the office is relocked, and so, if you like, you can use the office for business purposes."

And with this Sam walked away toward the hotel as coolly as though he were indeed the ruler of the town.

Many of the crowd followed him, while Max Mora and Augustin Andre entered the office, and the door was closed and locked after them.

They became seated, with a small writingtable between them, and surveyed each other, inquiringly.

"Well, now that we are alone for a few minutes, I presume it would be better that we understand one another," Max said, rather significantly.

"Perhaps you are right!" Andre replied, with a shrug. "If there is anything you don't understand, I am ready to enlighten you, so far as lies in my power."

"Well, there is considerably more that I do not understand, than that which I do understand. One thing I am in the dark about, is this murder business."

"Humph!" and Andre did not look pleased at the way in which the remark was put. "I guess everybody is as much in the dark about the matter, as yourself."

"Do you think so?" "Why, to be sure! One would infer from your speech, that you have an idea I could throw some light on the matter."

"Oh! no. You misconstrue my meaning. didn't know but you might have an opinion." "Maybe I have. I am not so sure about that."

"Well, who do you think murdered my uncle, and what was the object of the crime?"

Andre stroked his glossy beard. "Well, if I were to express my candid views on the matter," he said, finally, "I should say the matter of guilt rests between one of two persons."

"Who are they?" "Joe Colby, and Sunflower Sam."

"Pshaw! What object could Colby have in committing such a crime? Not that I wouldn't just as lief suspect him as any other person, but I fail to see the object, and as for Sunflower Sam you have not the slightest proof."

"Perhaps not, but the fact that after the murder, Colby and Sunflower Sam walked together as far as the hotel, and appeared to hold a more interested consultation than two utter strangers could be expected to do, gives a good clew to follow, I should say."

"Ah! did you see them?"

"I did."

"Did you overhear what they said?"

"No. They talked too low. You see, I don't directly charge that they did the job, but it looks to me as if they are more to be suspected than any one else."

"Perhaps you are right. But, in case they killed my uncle, how about their getting the reward until they produce the guilty man?"

Andre laughed. "You are not much of a reasoner!" he allowed. "Why, they will no doubt try to fasten the crime on some innocent man, and scare up enough bogus evidence to make a case. No telling but what either you or I might be selected as their victim, for a man who will take one life will not scruple to take another."

"Then, both of these men are dangerous?" "I regard them so. To be sure, I don't rate Colby as being shrewd enough to make a first class villain, but, what he lacks, the sport will make up for. I've set him down for a sharp, and he will improve the graft he has already got, and endeavor to rule the town, if he ain't checked."

"Curse him, yes! I don't like him!" "Nor I. But, he's in solid with the boys, and unless you and I can work together, and get him in some way implicated, so that he will lose his prestige, this camp will be too small to hold him, inside of a month."

"I quite agree with you there. I dislike Colby equally as much as I do the sport, and if one continuous ray of sunshine, and we never both were three feet under the ground I should not mourn their loss. Now, how about this will?"

"How do you mean?"

"Is it genuine?" "Why, of course! There can be no doubt of that. Green and Guff were witnesses."

"Humph! Two of the biggest liars in the camp. Between you and me, I believe the will is a forgery, and that you know all about it!"

Andre scowled. "You'd better not let anything of that sort drop, again!" he growled. "In not over fond of that peculiar kind of flattery, I'll have you know."

"Oh! you needn't get wrathy, because it won't discompose me. I'm satisfied of one thing -that Queenie is not uncle's wife."

"Of course she isn't, now? She's his widow."

"I doubt even that. In fact, Andre, you're playing a bold game--you and Queenie, and I know_it!"

"You know nothing of the sort. What the devil is the matter with you, anyhow! Are you not satisfied? With a fifty-thousand-dollar gold mine, you have no cause to kick."

"Maybe not. I prefer the cash, however." "So much the bigger fool you. You'd have the whole boodle blowed in, in two weeks. If you know how to play your cards, you can have an interest in the money, as well as the mine." "You mean by marrying Queenie?"
"Yes!"

"Thank you. You are a liberal man, ain't you, now? Get me married off to Queenie, and then you would have almost a clear path to approach Bly Barron. Oh no! my dear Andrenot any of that. Bly shall belong to me!"

"She shall not!" Andre exclaimed decisively; "I have sworn to possess that girl, and no power on earth shall prevent me from having her."

"We will see!" Max retorted, hotly. "I too have sworn to have her, and both of us cannot do so, so one or the other of us must drop out of the race!"

"Do you mean fight?" "That's precisely what I mean; to-night at twelve will suit me exactly."

CHAPTER VIII.

SAM AS THE GOOD SAMARITAN. WHEN Sunflower Sam reached the hotel, he went to his room, and was busied there for a couple of hours, in reflection, and planning.

He then came down-stairs, and took a stroll about the camp.

The excitement had in a measure abated, and the men of the camp were more scattered than at any time since the murder.

In the course of his stroll Sam passed quite near to the Mora dwelling, and as he did so, the front door opened and Bly Barron appeared upon the threshold.

As soon as she caught the detective's eye, she motioned to him, whereupon he turned back and approached her.

"I trust you will excuse me," she said, "but, mamma would like to speak with you, if you are not too busy."

"Certainly. I shall be glad to talk with her, and yourself," Sam replied, and followed her into the house.

Bly conducted him into a rear parlor, where Mrs. Mora lay upon a sofa, bolstered up with pillows.

She was very pale, and traces of tears upon her face showed that she had been weeping. Sam drew a chair near at hand, and sat down,

while Bly stood near his side. "I hope you are not ill, dear Mrs. Mora," he said, solicitously.

"No! but the shock has made me very weak," she replied. "I am so glad you came, Mr .-Mr.-"

"You may call me Bristol, although I am known in the camp as Sunflower Sam. Is there anything I can do for you Mrs. Mora?"

"I do not know-oh! I do not know. This has been such a terrible blow that it has driven me nearly crazy. I knew something dreadful was going to happen, for I had a premonition of it, but, Heaven only knows, I never expected it would be this foul lie. Oh! sir, you surely cannot believe it true, what that will says, for, as sure as there is an All-Wise ruling Power, it is not true! I am the wife of Joseph Mora, and have been, for twenty years, nor do I believe that he ever married the Andre girl!"

"I haven't a doubt but what you speak the truth ma'am!"

"Then, tell me, why is this in my husband's will? I cannot understand it. Our life has been knew an unhappy hour together."

"Well, in the first place, one of you evidently had an enemy-your husband, most likely, as he suffered death. In the second placewell, I don't believe we have your husband's true will!"

"You don't?" "I do not. The will I read to-day no doubt is

a base cheat and forgery!" "But it was witnessed?" "True, but witnesses can be bought readily

enough." "But, what could be the object of this cowardly attack upon me?"

"That remains to be found out. Have you your marriage-certificate, Mrs. Mora?" "Alas! no. It was destroyed by a fire, years ago, and we were negligent, and never got

another." Sam scratched his head. "That's bad," he said, slowly.

"Not possessing the certificate, you cannot, I presume, positively prove that you ever were lawfully married to Joseph Mora."

"I fear not. We were married in a city in the East, that was not our home, and dear knows what has ever become of the minister who married us, or his wife who witnessed the ceremony. I can prove that I have always lived with Mr. Mora as his wife, and have been known as his wife. Would that not be sufficient in the eyes of the law?"

"It would, no doubt, in most States and Territories, but I cannot speak for Arizona, as I do not know its laws in relation to such matters."

"Oh! it is terrible that such disgrace should fall on me, at my age in life. You said you believed the will to be a forgery." "Yes."

"Who do you think did it?"

"That is uncertain, although, if I were to suspect any one, I should look toward Augustin Andre."

"Ah! yes; I believe he's a bad man. He has for some time been trying to ingratiate himself into Bly's favor, but she has repulsed his advances, and given him to understand she did not care for his society. It may be this has caused him to seek such a cowardly revenge."

"Not at all improbable, though I should presume his main object was to get possession of

your late husband's money." "But how about his claim that Queenie was married to my husband? He said he could prove it, and-oh! sir, I cannot believe that my husband would have been so false to me as to

marry another woman." "Nor do I believe anything of the sort, Mrs. Mora," Sam declared. "The matter is plain enough to me that a diabolical scheme has been set on foot to defraud you of your rights, and if I can prove this, and that Andre is the instigator of it, I shall have but little difficulty in fastening the murder upon him."

"Oh! sir, if you can only help us out of this trouble, we shall be so grateful to you," Bly said, earnestly.

"You can bet I will try," Sam assured. "Has Andre ever had any business connection with your husband, Mrs. Mora?"

"No. Joseph has frequently told me that he had a none too exalted opinion of Andre, and the two were barely speaking acquaintances."

"One thing rather puzzles me," the Shasta detective said, after a pause.

"What's that?"

"Why, about the will being in the safe. If this will was not your husband's, then what was it doing where it was found?"

"That is more than I can explain, I am sure. No one knew how to open the safe except Joseph, for he has often told me that he had not much fear of being robbed, since no one knew how to open the safe but himself."

"Strange. Did your husband ever say anything about making a will?"

"A couple of months ago he jokingly remarked that, if the Beauty mine continued to ran out so well, he should have to be thinking of making a will before he got so rich that he would not know how to dispose of all his money. That is

Sunflower Sam took the will from his pocket, and glanced it over, then gave it to Mrs. Mora. "Do you recognize that as your husband's sig-

nature?" he asked. "It is his signature, or else a perfect fac-simile of it," was the unhesitating reply; "the writing of the will is not his, however.

"Ah! That is one point. Is the chirography of the will similar to that employed by any one else you know?"

"Not that I can remember now."

"Have you ever seen these witnesses, Tyler Green and Guff?" "No, sir."

"I have," said Bly. "They work at the Hickory mine, when they are not drunk. That ain't often."

"They are what can be classed as hard customers, eh?" "Yes, sir, notoriously so."

"Then it is not very likely that Mr. Mora would have had them as witnesses to his will?"

"I am pretty sure he wouldn't, for he never would give them employment because they were drunk so much, 'and such disreputable men.'" "Well, that's another point. Are you ac-

quainted with Andre's sister, Miss Barron?" "No, sir. She only came to You Bet a couple of months ago; and, as I did not like her brother, I took no pains to get acquainted with her."

Sam wrote a few minutes on his memorandum-book, and then glanced at his watch.

"Well, I'll do what I can for you," he said, "and that is liable to be not a little. Do not despair, for the darkest hour is before the dawn, you know. Keep up your spirits, and do not let this matter worry you, and if Augustin Andre comes around trying to bother you, don't give him any satisfaction, but refer him to me. I'll attend to his case."

"You are very kind, sir, and we are already under deep obligations to you. There is one thing more I wish to ask you: If this will is a forgery, how is it that the gold mine is bequeath-

ed to Max?"
Sam smiled.

"Well, if the will is a forgery, and Augustin Andre is the forger," he said, "the mine was left to Max as a blind, Andre being contented with the money."

"That's so! It wouldn't have been policy to have had the will leave everything to the woman,

Queenie."

"Certainly not."

Just then a footstep was heard coming near the door.

"That is Max!" Bly said, excitedly.

"The dickens! I'd rather not be seen here, just at this time," Sam said.
"Then step into this bedroom. You will be

"Then step into this bedroom. You will be safe there until he goes out again," Bly answered, and she ushered Sam into a small room off the parlor, and shut the door.

Not a moment too soon, for the detective heard young Mora enter the house and slam the door behind him, as if he were not in a very agreeable humor.

He entered the room where Mrs. Mora lay, and his voice was heard soon after speaking.

CHAPTER IX.

FIVE HUNDRED FOR SAM!

THE words of Max Mora indicated a duel, but the two villains talked matters over a while longer, and as a result when they left the shanty office and separated, they shook hands and were evidently upon the best of terms.

Andre went direct to his home and found Queenie lounging in the parlor reading a novel. "Well, what's the outlook?" she asked, looking

up listlessly. "Is the game a failure or a success?"

"Partly both," he replied, throwing himself into a chair. "The will has been read, and of course an exposure followed. That shocked the natives." and a bottle of between them.

Andre's entraped and a bottle of between them.

Andre's entraped and a bottle of between them.

Queenie laughed.

"I presume so. I have been too interested in this novel, really to get up and look out of the window. It is of a wicked scheming woman, who when about to commit a terrible sin suddenly yielded to the persuasion of her conscience, reformed her ways and married a nice man, who reminds me of that gentleman, Sunflower

Sam."
"Gentleman? Devil, you mean!"

"Why, how do you make that out? He didn't have any horns. But, did Mrs. Mora faint?"
"She let on to. Don't know whether it was

"Did you get the money?"

"No. It is locked up in the safe, and that infernal sunflower dude is the only one in the camp who knows how to open the safe. He opened it for them to get the will out, and then closed it again."

"No! The crowd don't take to the racket of the will for a cent, and they've decided to investigate the matter. So they've appointed this Sunflower Sam as chief investigator, and also as administrator and so forth of the Mora estate. So, until he is through with this investigation there's no likelihood of our getting the money, unless—"

"You blow open the safe?"

"Yes."

"Can't you do that?"

"I'm afraid not. It's too risky while that Shasta sharp is running loose around the camp. He must be got rid of somehow."

"Set Green and Guff on him."

"I can't hardly trust them with such a job.

If they didn't fetch their man the first clip, he'd clean 'em out in short order."

"How about Max Mora?"

"Oh! I've just had an interview with him. He is suspicious about the will, and he and I came near having a fight. I gave him a good talking to, however, and he promised to marry you. So that's settled!"

"I don't know whether it is or not!"
"What do you mean? What new caprice has struck you now?"

"Oh! I ain't so sure whether I want Max Mora now or not. I'm kind of mashed on Sunflower Sam!"

"I'll 'mash' you if you give me such nonsense as that!" Andre cried, angrily. "Dare to go back on me at this stage of the game and your life will answer for it!"

"Don't get bloodthirsty, now, brother dear,"
Queenie retorted, with tantalizing serenity. "I
don't see how my preference for some one besides
Mora will affect our fortunes."

"You don't, eh? Well, then, it's time you did.
If you marry Mora you wed the gold mine!"
"Perhaps! The gold mine ain't his, yet, how-

"It will be, fast enough. I'll see to that. After you are married, if Max should happen to get killed, by some casualty, you'd be his heiress."

suppose I shall have to marry Max to please you.
But, after I am made a widow, you can bet I shall set my cap for Sunflower Sam!"

"If you do, you will need to plant your cap several feet under ground!" Andre replied, significantly. "Mind you, if the fellow comes prying around here, as he no doubt will, I have already posted you how to act!"

"Never fear, dear brother, I will be sure to play my part as well as you do yours."

"If you do, we will have no cause to fear failure," Andre said, his face lighting up with pleasure.

Soon after, he left the house and, taking a drink at the Lone Deer saloon, and gazing with a perceptible shudder at the dark blood-stain on the floor, he took his way to a rude cabin on the outskirts of the camp.

Here he rapped loudly upon the door, and upon being bade to enter, he did so, and closed the door behind him.

He was in a large apartment, furnished simply with table, a few stools, and a couple of rude cot beds.

At the table were seated two men, engaged in playing cards—two as ill-favored looking individuals as could be found in all the camp, with the burning brand of Bacchus indelibly stamped upon their countenances—such a brace of pards as one would not care to meet in a lonely place of a dark night.

Both were well armed, with knives and pistels and the scowl upon his foreheat and a bottle of whisky was placed upon the table from his otherwise good looks.

"The will has been read and of between them.

Andre's entrance was greeted with a grunt of recognition.

"Sit down!" one of the men said, pointing to

a stool. "How's the lay?"

"All right, I guess," was the reply. "All that is needed is for you to swear up and down, when called upon, that you saw the will drawn up and signed, and the game will work, capitally."

"When do we get our pay, then?"

"Just as soon as I get mine, which will be only a few days at the furthest. By the way, I have another job for you which is cash down, as soon as you do it."

"You have seen the Sunflower Sport?"
"I have!" Green said. "I don't like him, nuther. He puts on too many blossoms."

"Well, I want him put out of the way as soon as possible, and so effectually that he never will bother me again. Do you understand? You and Guff must do the job."

Green poured out a glass of liquor, and tossed it off.

"Must is a big word, boss," he observed, grimly. "When any one comes any of their must business on us, they've got to be bigger than we are."

"Pshaw! You know what I mean. I want you to do the job and I will pay you well for it."

"Oh! well, that's a horse of a different color. What'll you pay?"

"If you will put the confounded meddler three feet under ground I'll give you a hundred dollars."

"A hundred dollars?"
"That's what I said."

"Yas, an' we heerd you say et. Now, then, take a good look at us. Do we luk like men as could be hired to commit murder, for a hundred dollars? Ef we do, we're deceived in our looks."

"Bah! You're but a pair of cut-throats, at the best!"

"Ye'r' no better than we are!" Green declared, doggedly.

"What do you mean, you hound?" exclaimed Andre furiously. "What do you mean, I say?" "I mean as how a chap as will cheat a widder

out of her weeds an' her money, is the wu'st kind

o' a cut throat."

"Bah!" and the villain looked relieved. "You will have enough to tend to if you mind your own business. If you don't want the job, at a hundred dollars, say so, and I'll get some one else to do it."

"That's what you better be doin', then. Our figgers knock a hundred dollars higher than a

kite."

"Curse it, how much do you want?"
"If you want Sunflower Sam planted so deep that he can't be found on resurrection day, our terms are five hundred dollars, half cash down, in advance!"

Andre uttered an oath.

He did not want to part with so much money, and yet he did not know any one else in the camp whom he could get to do his evil work.

There were other tough characters, to be sure, but he had his doubts about trusting them. These men, Green and Guff, he felt more con fidence in.

"You are a pair of infernal skins!" he growled. "I'll make it two hundred and fifty, and half down."

"Oh! no. Not any! We have other more valuable engagements."

"Nonsense. I know better than that. However, I'll come to your terms if you will promise me one thing."

"Name it, and we aire your huckleberries!"
"You must promise to put Sunflower Sam out of the way before another morning dawns."

"All right. We kin do that same without any trouble at all. So doe over yer dudads an' we're yers truly."

Andre produced his wallet from an inner pocket and counted out two hundred and fifty

dollars upon the table.
This Green divided equally between himself

and partner.

Then, after giving a few precautionary instructions, Augustin Andre took his departure, feeling satisfied that his most dangerous enemy would soon be out of his way.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Max Mora entered the little back parlor, where Mrs. Mora lay, his face was flushed, and the scowl upon his forehead detracted much from his otherwise good looks.

His breath, too, smelt strongly of liquor.
Bly was seated by Mrs. Mora's side as he entered, and he paused in the middle of the room, gazing at the two women in a strange way.

"An artist might make something of the picture," he observed, "providing he was not acquainted with the subjects."

"What do you mean, sir?" Bly demanded,

"I mean, perhaps, that I am surprised at your devotion to Margaret" he retorted. "One

devotion to Margaret!" he retorted. "One would naturally suppose you would not have so deep an interest in the one who has all along tried to break up your interviews with a certain laborer called Colby."

"My affection for mamma has not lessened,

sir, on that account!" Bly said, coldly. "Indeed, it has rather increased, since this cowardly effort has been made to ruin her."

"Indeed! Mamma is a very sweet-sounding name, Miss Bly, but do you not think it is a little out of place, under the present circumstances?"

"No, sir, I do not! For shame, Max Mora, that you should insinuate she was not your uncle's wife!"

"I do not insinuate anything of the sort,"
Max declared, seating himself; "for it has been conclusively proven that she was not my uncle's wife, by his own will!"

"It has not been conclusively proven, sir. That will is a forgery—a base, lying instrument of evil intent. Your uncle never drew up that will, and you know it, Max Mora!"

"You are wrong, my dear Bly. I was not even positive that a will existed at all until we found it in the safe. My uncle may not have drawn up the will, but he signed it, in the presence of witnesses. Queenie Andre also has a certificate of marriage with him. Have you one, Margaret?"

one, Margaret?"
Mrs. Mora had listened, her face flushed with indignation, but she could no longer hold in.

"No, I have not, and well you know it, you young villain, or else you would not ask me. Our marriage-certificate was destroyed by fire, years ago, before my husband took you in, out of charity, and I became the same as a mother to you."

Max winced a trifle, but finally went on:
"Oh! of course you have been kind to me, and

all that, and I appreciate the fact for what it is worth. That's nothing to do with your being my uncle's wife, however. My uncle, in his will, distinctly states that you were never married to him, but was his servant. Had you been his wife, he would most likely have left you the bulk of his fortune, as he did to Queenie, whom he acknowledged as his wife.

"As matters stand, I cannot see but what the most advisable thing for you to do will be to pack up your things and seek other quarters. You are hardly the proper person for Bly to associate with, owing to the atmosphere of uncertainty that hangs about you, and-"

"Stop!" cried Bly, springing up, and stamping her foot upon the floor, indignation flashing from her eyes. "Stop! Max Mora, before you go too far! I'll have you know you are insulting me, when you insult mamma!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed! If you have nothing else to do than come here to make an exhibition of your disagreeable nature, you had better go!"

Max laughed sarcastically. "Well, I don't know about that. I presume I sha'n't hurry myself, in particular. The fact is, I came here on business."

"On business, sir? Then you had better defer it until another time, as neither mamma nor I have any disposition to transact business so soon

after papa's funeral." "The business I have on hand does not particularly concern mammu, or at least, it is not with her I have to deal, you understand. You are the one I have to deal with, and if you will listen, you will find it to your advantage."

"I will not listen to you. I know what you would say, and I will tell you no, to start with!"

Bly cried, impetuously.

"Are you not a little premature, Miss Barron? True, you have evidently divined the import of what I was about to say, but you might at least have given me the opportunity of saying it before sealing your verdict.

"It is true, Bly, that I love you honestly, sincerely and candidly, and want you for my wife. I'm not a bad fellow, if I had some gentle woman as a guide—one who would encourage me and help me to seek a higher sphere in life. You could do that, Bly, and I want you for my wife!"

"It is simply useless for you to make any such plea, Mr. Mora," Bly promptly returned, "for I do not love you, nor have I ever given you any reason to suppose that I did. The only one I care enough for to marry is Joe Colby-the laborer, as you term him—and, as we are engaged, you will at once see that that settles the

matter."

"I don't see it in that light. Engagements are as easily broken as they are made, and I cannot see what you can want of a poor man like Colby. You surely do not want to live a life of poverty and privation. Marry me, and I can give you riches. Marry me, and Queenie Andre shall never touch a penny of my uncle's wealth, but all the money shall go to you as your wedding-gift. More, I will, by fair means or foul, establish the fact that Queenie never was my uncle's wife, but that Margaret here was his wife, and is his widow. Not, of course, that I believe it, for my uncle's will proves to the contrary. But to win you, Bly Barron, I will do anything that lies in my power."

He spoke earnestly, eloquently, and appeared

to mean just what he said.

Bly gazed at Mrs. Mora inquiringly, as much as to say:

Shall I do it for your sake?" But the poor woman shook her head sadly.

To save her own name from disgrace she could not bring unhappiness to one so young and good as Bly.

"No-no!" she said, slowly; "make no such sacrifice on my account. Better always be poor and happy with the one you love, than rich and unhappy. I can bear the dishonor that has been heaped upon me until our friend clears matters up."

"Your friend, eh?" sneered Max. "So that scoundrel, Sunflower Sam, has been here stuf-

fing you up, has he?"

"That's none of your business, sir!" retorted Bly, quickly. "My answer to you, Max Mora, is no! So the quicker you go the better."

"But, as it happens, my dear, I am not going so quick as you may imagine. You are a ter. bit too hasty in your decision. You do not seem to realize that I am not a man to be trifled with."

"Nor do I want you to think for an instant I am afraid of you!" and Bly's eyes flashed. "If not afraid, I'll make you feel my power. I will discharge that numskull, Joe Colby, and

I'll turn you out of house and home, curse you! if you persist in refusing to marry me!"

"You cannot turn us out!" cried Bly. "I defy you to, you coward! Unless Joseph Mora's will is a forgery, I own this house, and all that's

"You do, eh?" "Yes, I do, and you're nothing but a low, mean wretch, to try to make us any more

trouble!" "I am, eh? Well, I don't care a cent for that, my dear. Do you refuse—for the last time—to

marry me?" "Yes, I refuse, for the last time, to marry

"Then let me tell you that, henceforth, I am your enemy, and you shall suffer the consequences of my revenge, in order that you may know that I am no fool! I'll give you just five minutes to pack your duds and get out of this house. If you are not gone in that length of time, I'll pitch you out, head-foremost. You hear me?"

"But we don't heed you!" Bly cried, undauntedly. "We hate, loathe and despise you,

you contemptible wretch!"

Max sprung to his feet with a fearful oath. "Take back them words, or I'll murder you!" he gritted, at the same time clutching Bly by the throat—"take 'em back, I say!"

"No, she don't-not while this here bloomin' Sunflower is around!" cried the Man from Shasta, as he leaped from the bed-room and with a tremendous blow knocked young Mora clean off his feet.

Then, the sport detective threw open the door, jerked the young villain to his feet, and cried:

"Now, you get!" and applying the toe of his boot to Mora's rear, Sam kicked him into the street, each application of the boot causing the victim to yell with pain.

As soon as he was out of doors, Max ran for dear life, and close at his heels followed the Shasta Shadow.

CHAPTER XI.

MISS PEGGY PRIM'S ADVENT. THE sight of Max Mora running at full speed, and Sunflower Sam following in close pursuit, soon attracted the attention of what people there were on the street, and, as may be supposed, instantly created a sensation.

Max aimed direct for the Lone Deer Saloon, and when he reached it, dodged inside with an agility that made the spectators laugh.

Sunflower Sam came to a halt, outside the saloon, however, a broad smile playing over his handsome face, while a crowd gathered around

"What's the matter? What was ye chasin' Mora fer?" were the questions put by a chorus of voices.

"Oh! we were having a little foot-race, just for fun!" Sam replied-"anyhow, it was for fun, as far as I was concerned. I guess by the way Mora ran, he thought every minute was his last. You see I caught him trying to choke Bly Barron, and I booted him out of the house, and gave him chase. The next time I catch him at any such beastly game I'll do him in different shape!"

And with this declaration, the Man from Shasta pushed his way through the crowd, and made his way to the hotel.

Nothing more occurred until evening, worthy

of mention. As usual, however, in every mining-camp, when the lights were lit for the evening, the "citizens" began to congregate at the saloons

and at the gaming parlor, of which we have before made mention.

It was a well-fitted up place, with ample space for tables and chairs, and a good bar.

camp, and, as a consequence the gaming-room was always well filled.

After supper, Sunflower Sam wandered into the place, bent on seeing who was present, and, if convenient, to drop into a game of cards.

Luck favored him, and he soon struck up a game for a small limit, with a man from the East, who, like the detective, wanted to pass away a few hours.

Every table was occupied, and every one seemed in good spirits, especially those thirsty denizens who were ranged along the bar coun-

The evening was only partly advanced, when the door opened, and Augustin Andre and Max Mora entered the place together.

They took a drink at the bar, and then sauntered along to the further end of the long room. and took seats at a table.

As they passed the table where Sunflower Sam | sence me and he last met!"

was seated, both glanced at him, and exchanged glances, and smiled, significantly.

Sam, without appearing to notice them, did see them however, and that smile also.

"They've joined issues," was his comment, "and if they don't mean me mischief, I'm off my reckoning. I'll be alert, however, and my name ain't Dead- Sunflower Sam, if I don't beat 'em!"

About half an hour afterward, the door opened, and a woman came sweeping into the

gaming-room, with the air of a queen.

And such a woman, too! Not a man was there who did not stop play-

ing, to gaze at her, in astonishment.

She was an old maid, that was evident, although her face would have been rather goodlooking and much younger in appearance, if her "make up" had been less ancient.

Of medium hight, she was attired in a large figured dress, with a sweeping trail, and wore an imitation Paisley shawl about her shoulders. Upon her head was a bonnet such as was worn a score of years ago, gayly decorated with rosettes and ribbons.

Her hair was worn in long curls, two of which were allowed to occupy conspicuous po-

sitions in front of either ear.

Her eyes were sharp and penetrating, and her mouth had a firm, half-defiant expression, which, coupled with the fact that she carried a whip of rawhide in one hand, suggested the idea that she was on the war-path.

When fairly in the saloon, she stopped and gazed first at the bar and then at the rows of tables at which dozens of men were engaged in shuffling or dealing the pasteboards.

"Well! well!" she ejaculated, in a voice of high pitch. "Did you ever! As I live, these wicked men aire playin' cards! What would Deacon Plum say of he was to see this sinful sight!"

"Hillo! mum, what's bitin' ye?" sung out Skin Platt, the bartender, whom it was hard to

find in a bad bumor.

"What's bitin' me?" echoed the strange female. "Why, sir, nothin's bitin' me! Ye orter be ashamed o' yoursel's, a-settin' here an' aplayin' cards. I wouldn't be afraid to bet a cow there ain't a solitary meetin'-house ner preacher in this town."

"Nary a one, Mehetible Sarah Ann!" remarked Skin. "This aire ther only place where the boys do congregate, an' there ain't no preachin', but every one is free to cuss as much as he pleases. Occasionally there's a funeral heer, when some galoot dies wi' his boots on!"

"Dies with his boots on!"

" Cert'."

"The onchristian brute! An' so this is the sort of a hot-bed of vice, sin and corruption that Gus Andre is livin' in. For shame! for shame! What ever would Deacen Plum say!"

"Say, old hoopskirts, who aire you, anyhow,

an' where'd you come from?"

"Me? I am Miss Peggy Prim, from Grubville Corners, Connettycut, an' I am the schoolma'an there for the last five successive summers and winters, ahem!" was the lofty reply.

"Peggy Prim, eh? Waal, yer look prim enough, thet's mighty sartain. So you've teached skewl fer five years, hey, an' learnt ther young idea how ter shoot?"

"I have, and a smarter school there ain't, out-

side of Yale College, if I do say it." "Ye don't say? What ye bin doin' the other

forty year ye wasn't teachin' school!" "Forty years?" and Peggy gave the whip a vicious crack; "forty years? You good-fornothin', insultin' vagabond! Why, I'm only twenty-three years old, last February! The idea! Forty years!"

"Oh! well, old gal, that's all right!" allowed There were some good card-players in the Skin, keeping an eye on the whip. "I ain't much good at guessin', an' when I come to look square at you you don't look much more than sixteen. Come up and have some benzine!"

"Benzine! Goodness gracious! Am I to be insulted in this manner? I drink liquor-I a member of Deacon Plum's congregation, in good standing? Not I! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you horrid sinner, to propose such a thing to a decent, respectable girl. I've a great notion to give you a sound whipping for your impertinence."

"You'd better not try it on!" Skin declared. "ef ye don't want me to shoot thet pagoda off'm your pinnacle. What d'ye want heer, any-

how?" "I came to hunt up Augustin Andre. D'ye know him? His stuck-up sister sed I would find

him here. He's my cousin, an' l know he'll be awful glad to see me, once more, it's so long

Skin Platt was something of a wag, and foresaw a pile of fun ahead, and so said:

"Why, yes, Peggy, Andre is here, to-night; so come along, and I'll show him to yer." And he led the way down the room, to where

Andre and Max Mora sat, Peggy following close behind him, and by her odd appearance, eliciting many a laugh from the crowd.

"You're a pack of onmannerly blockheads!" she cried, glaring at them, with snapping eyes. "Ye ain't got so much decency an' respect for a lady, as a horse."

When they reached Andre's table, Skin pushed

Peggy in front of him, saying:

"Andre, old boy, here's your cousin, Peggy Prim, all ther way from Grubville, to see you. Peggy, me daisy, this man wi' ther whiskers, is Augustin Andre."

"For land's sakes! Is that you, Gus Andre?" cried Peggy, putting out her hand. "Why, how you hev grown, sence you an' I used ter go berryin', down at Grubville! Laws goodness! I should scarcely of known ye, with all that hair on your face!"

The crowd snickered, while Andre drew back,

with an oath.

"Get out, you infernal lunatic!" he cried. "I don't knew you!"

"Don't know me, Peggy Prim, when you an' Sis used ter live right in dad's house? Why, Gus Andre, what a whopper! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. But, then, I suppose you can't help tellin' fibs, 'cause you live in sech a wicked town. Just to think! Whatever would Deacon Plum say, ef he was here?"

"To the devil with Deacon Plum, and you, too!" cried Andre. "I tell you I don't know you, and never saw you, you scare-crow, so make yourself scarce, or I'll have you kicked out

o' doors." "Well, above all things!" and Peggy's hands went up, and she looked the picture of genuine astonishment. "You are the worst story-teller I ever heard. But, 'cause I'm a country relation from down East, ye needn't be so stuck up, an' pretend ye don't know me. Not a bit of it. You do know me, and, what's more, I've come to spend the winter with ye. I suppose ye think because I'm Peggy Prim, an' come from Grubville, and am a little old-fashioned, that I ain't jest as good as you are, an' yer stuckup sister in the bargain-Queenie you call her, now, eh? When ye used ter live at dads, Sis an' Jane were good-enough names for her! Oh! ye needn't try to crawl around the stump, Gus, for ye know me, an' might as well own up. Ye needn't think I've come heer to sponge on you, fer I ain't. Dad an' mam is dead, now, an' I've got more money than I know what to do with, an' so I thought I'd come out West an' get you to invest it in gold mines, an' cattle pasters, an' sech. But, laws! s'pected a different reception than this tho'. tho't you'd be half tickled to death to see me, and I brought along a jar of elderberry jam for you, what mam put up, just a week before she died. Lands alive! ye needn't be skerry about thet matter that happened afore ye came West, Gus, 'cause dad is dead and-"

How much longer Peggy would have talked on, is hard to say, had not Andre at this juncture sprung to his feet. He was white with anger and mortification, and so agitated that he fairly trembled.

He knew that every one was looking at him, and that nothing could be gained by denial, as every one no doubt believed that the woman was what she claimed to be; so he summoned up courage, and said:

"Gentlemen, this woman, I am free to say, is my country relative from the East. Miss Prim, if you will allow me, I will conduct you to my | in?" residence!"

"See!" cried Peggy, snapping the whip, triumphantly;-"didn't I tell ye he knowed me? He didn't want to let on he did, though, 'cause I come from Grubville, where, goodness knows, there's more pious people than there is in this outlandish place. Lead on, Gus. I'm powerful glad to see you, and we'll have a good oldfashioned visit, and I'll get you to invest my money in minin' stocks, an' sech!"

With his teeth set tightly together, and his eyes emitting a dangerous gleam, Andre strode toward the door, closely followed by Peggy, and as the two quitted the place, the crowd inside

gave a rousing cheer. "Ten thousand curses seize this woman!" Andre muttered under his breath. "I wouldn't have had this happen for a thousand dollars. shall be the laughing stock of the camp. What in the name of Satan ever possessed her to come here, and at such a time, too? I dare not kick her out, or she might go and blow all about that

forged note, which she came near doing, tonight."

As they walked toward the Andre house,

Peggy chattered away, volubly, but Andre kept his mouth shut for fear be should say something to offend the "girl" from Grubville, which he did not wish to do, now that he had acknowledged the relationship—not, at least, until he had sounded her and ascertained how much money she possessed.

If enough to make it any object, Augustin Andre was prepared to make Peggy's stay in

You Bet exceptionally interesting. When they arrived at the dwelling, Peggy

was ushered into the parlor, where Miss Queenie sat, engaged in some fancy crochet work. "For Heaven's sake, Gus, you have not

brought that—that—?" she began, with a disgusted glance at Peggy's raiment.

But Andre checked her by a warning shake of the head; then, his face became radiant with smiles as he said:

"Softly! softly! my dear. You evidently do not recognize this lady. Do you remember your cousin, Peggy Prim, of Grubville?"

"Certainly, brother, but really, this isn't Peggy, is it?" Queenie said, condescendingly

"Yes, this is Peggy, sure enough!" Andre replied, "and she has come West to pay us a visit and invest in mining matters. I trust you will try to make everything pleasant for her."

"Why, Jane Ann, I should have thought you'd 'a' knowed me!" Peggy said, advancing and putting out her hand, on which was worn a cotton glove. "How d'ye do, anyhow?"

"I'm quite well, thank you!" Queenie replied, shaking hands, with an expression of disgust upon her face. "Take off your shawl and bonnet, and sit down. Shall I order the servant to make you a cup of tea?"

"I don't keer if you do, Jane Ann. I'm powerful tired a-joltin' over the mountain roads in the stage, an' a cup o' tea allus does me good."

So Peggy took off her things and sat down, while Queenie hastened into another apartment. Andre sat down and surveyed his country cousin sharply.

"Well, Pgggy, what brought you away out here?" he finally asked, as Peggy put on a pair of spectacles, and then drew some knitting ma-

terial from her pocket. "Well, you see," she answered, "after the old folks died, I sorter got the fever to cum West an' invest my money so et would draw more than simple interest. I heerd you was out heer, an' so I thought I'd come and see you, and kill two birds with one stone. Married yet, Gus?"

"Oh! no." "Laws me! Ye don't tell me! Well, I ain't, neither. I often snicker when I think o' dad's wantin' to marry you an' me, an' we both cousins. Dad had some queer notions. I s'pose you remember Uriah Opedyke?"

"Yes." "Well, Uriah an' me has been keepin' company for a long time, an' I 'spected to marry him, as much as could be, but, first I know'd, he scooted off, and that's the last I've seen or heard of him."

"I suppose you are pretty rich, Peggy?" "Yes, purty tolerable. I've got seven thousan' dollars in clean cash, besides Isaac Parker's note for a brindle cow, what fetched forty dollars at the auction."

"I should think you'd be a little skittish about carrying so much money about your person?"

"Land o' goodness! You don't suppose I carry it around in my clothes? Not much! I ain't so green as that. Guess you remember the red chest, don't you, what dad used to keep tools

"Well, anyhow, I fetched that along, with a lot of beddin', carpet-rags and one thing and another in it, an' the money's in the chest. I argued no one would look in that for money, and, besides, them padlocks on the chest are purty strong."

"Where is the chest?" "It won't be here for a couple o' days. It's comin' on a mule-wagon from the railroad station."

Having found out this much, Andre did not question her further, but left her in Queenie's charge, and left the house.

"I'll have her money when it comes!" he muttered, as he betook himself toward the gambling room.

"Seven thousand dollars ain't a fortune!" he argued, "but it will do to light cigars with, providing it's in greenbacks. Ha! ha! Queenie don't like her country cousin, for a cent. I was at first tempted to believe that the woman wasn't | do you want?"

Peggy, but it can't be otherwise, for she knows all about Grubville and other matters."

Thus musing, Andre reached and entered the gaming saloon, where Max Mora was evidently waiting for the elder villain's return.

"Is all ready?" Andre asked.

"Yes." "What of the nigger?"

"Sent him away." "Then come. Our time to work is when no one is liable to miss us!"

And they left the place together.

What did it mean?

CHAPTER XII.

THE ANIMATED SKELETON'S CALLER.

SHORTLY after Augustin Andre had left the gaming-room to conduct Peggy Prim to his residence, Sunflower Sam finished playing cards, coming out the winner by a few dollars.

He loitered about the tables watching the games, after which he had a chat with Skin Platt, the bartender, who was full of glee, as usual.

"Wasn't et rich?" he cried, "ter see his royal nibs a-escortin' thet old vinegar-blossom out o' heer? By beeswax! I thought I should bu'st myself a-laffin', fer I see'd jest how et was, ye know. 'Gustus he hev allus kinder held his nose higher than ther rest o'us—war sorter dignified, yer know, an' considered himself above common trash, as the darkies say. I bet ye could tech his pride, now, with a two-inch tooth-pick, whar it would 'a' taken a ten-foot pole before. Haw! haw! haw!"

And Skin went off into a spasm of laughter. "If his pride has suffered it may be a good thing for him," Sam observed. "By the way, sir, do you know the two men, Green and Guff, who were witnesses to the Mora will?"

"I know all I want to about 'em!" was the reply. "Ef I'd give 'em tick, they'd be my best customers, but sez I, nary more tick!"

"Have you seen them around to-night?" " No."

"Where do they generally hang out?"

"They've got the last cabin, at the lower end of camp. They're generally there, when nowheres else." "Dangerous chaps, eh?"

"Waal, I dunno. J guess ef a feller was ter face 'em they'd weaken, but they've got the

reputation o' bein' tough." After a few other inquiries, Sam left the

He had got on track of a lawyer named Seth Sligo, and he proposed to pay Seth an evening

Sligo's office was a room over a grocery store, reached by a rickety pair of stairs, that threatened to give way beneath one's weight.

This evening saw the legal light of You Bet seated before his desk, upon which shone the sickly light of a candle, and before the disciple of Blackstone were spread out a number of documents of legal appearance.

The room's only furniture was the desk, a broken-backed chair, and the stool upon which Sligo was seated.

The scarcity of the furniture was in keeping with the meagerness of the man who used it.

He was some forty years old, of medium hight of men, and as slim, literally, as a bean-pole. There was seemingly nothing of him but the original framework, with the skin drawn over it, and his face was so thin and haggard as to be almost hideous in appearance.

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He wore no beard, and his hair seemed to grow upright like bristles, and was liberally mixed with gray.

Mr. Sligo was dressed in a seedy broadcloth suit, and with a little more flesh, would have looked more like a minister than a lawyer.

He was engaged in poring over the documents before him when there came a peremptory knock upon the door, that caused his attorneyship to give a violent start.

"Come in!" he cried, his heart beating tumultuously in hope that he was about to receive a call from some one whom he could bleed for a

In answer to his invitation, the door opened and a man entered, the sight of whom caused a chill of terror to run down Sligo's thinly covered spine.

The visitor was attired from top to toe in somber black, wore a black mask over the upper portion of his face, and was armed with a pair of handsome revolvers, one of which he carried in his grasp.

"Good heavings!" gasped Sligo, fairly trembling with terror. "Who are you, and wha

"I am thy father's spirit!" cried the visitor, in mock tragic tones.

"Oh, Lordy! gracious!" chattered Sligo. "Don't shoot-mister, don't shoot, I beg! I beg your pardon a thousand times!"

"Ye do, eh?" retorted the visitor, as he came forward and helped himself to a seat on the chair. "Well, sir, if you don't want me to ballast you with lead, you'd better beg my pardon. If the old court knows herself, I'm a bad man, and I wear socks made out o' rattlesnake-skins! Who are you, anyhow, rackabones?"

"My name is John Sligo, sir, tho' I have got a middle name of Seth, by which I am more

frequently called."

"You are a liar-I mean a lawyer-are you not?

"I am an attorney, sir."

"You look as if business had not been brisk lately—as if the free lunches of You Bet had been few and far between."

"Business has been rather dull in my line for spendingly scarce. Is there any legal matter I can adjust for you, sir?"

"Well, I don't know. I may give you the job of settling up my ducal estate in England, if you serve me right. If you don't, I'll take your head for a bull's-eye, and indulge in a little pistol-practice. D'ye know who I am?"

"No, no! nor I don't want to. If you will only please to leave my office, I shall be very

glad.' "Oh, don't get in so much of a hurry. I'll tell you who I am. I'm Deadwood Dick, Junior, the death-dealing defender of the defenseless women and down-trodden children."

"What's that to me? I ain't no wuman, nor never had any children!" declared Sligo, keeping a nervous watch of Dick's pistol-hand.

"No, but you are a guilty wretch!" thundered Dick. "You drew up the will of Joseph Mora, did you not?"

"No, no! I have never drawn up a will since I have been in this camp."

"Look out now. None of your lying to me." "I am not lying, sir-I am not lying!"

"I believe you are, you superannuated slim, and if I find out such to be the case, you look out, for I'll come back here and break every bone in your skeleton framework!"

"Believe me, sir, I did not draw Joseph | Mora's will!" protested Sligo, vehemently. "] never did any work at all for that gentleman."

"Who did draw up the will, then?"

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"That I do not know." "Mind you, now! You'd better tell the truth, for if I catch you in a lie off goes your head! am a bad man. You must have heard of Deadwood Dick, the road-agent and avenger?"

"Yes, I have heard of him." "Well, I'm the second edition of that same and I'm making things jingle. Thar's a scheme up to ruin Mrs. Mora's reputation and get possession of Mora's money. I'm going to balk that little scheme, and so if you know anything about it, it will pay you well to come over to my side."

"I tell you I know nothing about such a scheme, nothing about the will you mention, nor nothing about Mora's affairs."

"Very we'l!" Dick said, rising to depart. "I'll take your word for it for the present, but if I find out different woe be unto you!" There'll be one less shyster in this camp."

And with this admonition he took his departure much to Sligo's relief no doubt, for he began to hastily bundle his papers together, destroying such ones as were of no special importance.

If that villain catches me in You Bet an hour from now, he'll be smarter than I am!" the disriple of Blackstone grimly chuckled.

> CHAPTER XIII. A CELESTIAL DESCENT.

As the reader has no doubt surmised, Deadwood Dick, Junior, and Sunflower Sam were one and the same persons, the latter make-up having been adopted for a purpose to be hereinafter explained.

Leaving the lawyer's office, Sam made his way to a lonely spot beyond the outskirts of the town, and inside of a few minutes once more transformed himself into his guise of the sport from Shasta.

He then sauntered back toward the gaming room, just to see Andre and Max Mora leave the place and walk off in the direction of the mouth of the Beauty mine.

"Mischief," Sam muttered. "Them two chaps ain't stickin' so close together for any good purpose. I wonder if they ain't going to try to burst open the safe?"

He followed cautiously after them, but, to his 1 ly.

surprise, however, they kept on past the office of the Mora mine.

"What the dickens does this mean!" the detective mused, not a little puzzled. "Evidently they're not after the money. I'll know what their racket is if I have to follow 'em clear to Alaska."

Andre and Mora continued straight on until they came to the mouth of the Beauty mine drift, where they halted.

By extreme caution, Sunflower Sam managed to gain a position behind a bowlder, within a few feet of where they had halted.

The Beauty mine was located just beyond the built-up limits of the camp, and was one of the richest quartz lodes in that section of the territory. There was but one other mine in You Bet, and that was owned by a gambler named Jim Cole, and it was not nearly so productive as the Beauty, nor did it give employ to half so many men.

The mouth of this mine, which was known as some time," Sligo assented, "and money corre- the Agnes, was about two hundred yards above stood by Sunflower Sam, that we can do quite the Beauty.

> The ore taken from these two mines was hauled by carts to the crusher at Globe City.

> On coming to a halt, near the mouth of the Beauty mine, neither Andre nor Mora spoke for several minutes, but appeared to be listening. "Strange that Harkley has not come by this

> time," Max said, at last. "He is generally punctual to a minute."

> "Perhaps he has had some difficulty in his arrangements with Cole," suggested Andre.

> "Oh! there's no fear of that. The Agnes is sold to Harkley safe enough, and he got it at a bargain. He and I have had the matter working for a month past, and now the two mines are under our control. We will make some of these high-minded miners of You Bet pull up stakes and vamoose for other parts, or else they will have to come down to Chinese wages. In fact, we prefer the Chinamen, anyhow."

> "Perhaps the matter will be a go!" Andre said, doubtingly; "but I'm afraid there will be

bloodshed." "Bah! If there is it will be white blood that is spilled. The Chinamen outnumber the present population of You Bet two to one; and, more than that, they're all armed and know how to fight. If the whites don't come down to our terms, they can starve. We are not supposed to be forced to pay high wages when we can get | but I've a notion they won't succeed. They've all the help we need for a mere song."

"True. The present hands won't bear you

much good will, though."

"A fig for that! They've got their choice of working for low wages or not working at all. Then, too, I owe 'em a grudge for meddling in the affairs of the Mora estate, and appointing that scoundrel, Sunflower Sam, as administrator."

"Well, you needn't have any fear that that chap will interfere much with your schemes after to-night. I've taken it upon myself to arrange to have his goose cooked!"

"Good. I am glad of that, for I can well wish him out of my way. Ha! some one approaches.

No doubt it is Boss Harkley!" Heavy footsteps came nearer and nearer, and then a tall, brawny man loomed up before the

two arch schemers. A very giant he was, roughly dressed, and armed to the teeth; the possessor of a coarse, brutal and bloated face, midnight eyes, and long hair and sweeping mustache, that was coal black.

All in all, he was as ruffianly a looking chap as one would care to meet.

"Hello! Is that you, boss?" Max Mora saluted, as the giant approached.

"Yas, it's me," was the gruff response. "Been | that lined the path. waitin' long?" "Only a few minutes. How is everything?"

"All ready. Who's that with ye?" "This is Mr. Augustin Andre, a friend of

mine, who will work in co-operation with me. Mr. Andre, this is Boss Harkley, from Carterville, agent for the Frisco firm that's introducin' cheap help into the different mining sections. Boss can furnish a small army of Chinamen at very short notice, and generally has a force in reserve, so as to fill orders in quick time."

"Sort of a slave trade, as it were?" suggested Andre.

"Oh! yes. But, that's no one's business but our own," Max replied. "If we can double our income by employing rat-eaters, it's to our interest to do so."

At this juncture Boss Harkley took a silver whistle from his pocket, and blew a sharp blast upon it.

"I'll show you our beauties!" he said, grim-

horsemen came into view, or rather mule-men, for the party were mounted upon burros, and mules. As they drew near, it was to be seen that all were Chinamen, with the exception of four ruf-

It was but a couple of minutes ere the sound

of horses' feet was heard, and then a band of

fianly-looking white men, who acted as escorts; for the party, numbering two hundred, was separated into four divisions, and each division had its captain in the person of one of the white men, before mentioned.

Each Chinaman, besides a rifle and revolver, was equipped with mining tools, a small tent, and cooking utensils; so they were all ready to camp down at any time and place.

By a signal from Harkley, the cavalcade drew up in lines of fifty abreast, and then he and Andre and Mora passed up and down the lines, and made a careful inspection of the men.

"Splendid!" Max cried, excitedly. "I am more than pleased. We will show the fools who well, without them."

"Of course. I'd give more for a Chinaman, as far as work is concerned, than I would for two white miners!" Boss Harkley declared.

He then ordered the new-comers to camp in the vicinity, and in such a manner that approach of the white miners of You Bet, to either of the mines, would be cut off.

This was done, and precautions were taken to make as little noise as possible.

The Chinamen went to work with a will, and pitched their diminutive tents, while the live stock of the party, was tethered out to graze up the gulch, where the braying of the burros would not be likely to be heard by the people of

You Bet. Sunflower Sam had retained his position behind the bowlder, to watch the progress of affairs, and learn what was to be learned; but he finally saw that it behooved him to get out of the new camp before he was hemmed in, as he had no particular desire to be discovered; so he flitted about, and at last got beyond the lines.

The circle of tents had been so formed as to take in the office of the Beauty mine.

This is a very fine piece of diplomatic work," the detective muttered, "and there's going to be trouble. Harkley, Mora and Co., intend to run matters pretty much as they please, it seems, got the office within their lines, and protection enough to give them a chance to blow open the safe. Whether they will attempt to do it or not is a question! Hello! what the blazes is this?"

He paused stock-still, and gazed in astonishment at the spectacle which caused his exclamation.

Coming directly toward him, and but a few yards away, he beheld a ghostly figure, clad in white.

The darkness was so intense that he could not make out whether it was animate or otherwise. but it certainly had a most uncanny and spookish appearance.

It apparently had come from You Bet camp, and was making in a direct line toward the knoll where Joseph Mora had been buried that day!

> CHAPTER XIV. AN ALL NIGHT RUCTION.

SUNFLOWER SAM was not naturally of a superstitious nature, but the sight of the figure in white, gave him a start.

If he did not move there would be a collision with the ghostly rambler, so he stepped quickly to one side, behind a clump of scrub bushes.

Nearer and nearer came the white clad figure, until Sam became satisfied that it was some person clad in a flowing robe, and a night-cap, whose wide border almost completely concealed the face from view-so much so, at any rate. that the detective could not distinguish enough of the features to recognize them.

He concluded, by the slow movement of the nocturnal perambulator, that it was a woman. As she went straight on past the place where Sam had stood, without either looking to the

right or to the left, he concluded that he had not been seen.

"Well! here's a go!" he muttered. "Some person is evidently trying to play ghost! I wonder if they calculate to represent Joseph Mora's departed spirit? Ha! ha! Poor Joseph wouldn't feel flattered, I fancy, to see his ghost cavortin' about You Bet, so soon after his burial. I believe I'll follow this woman in white, and see what racket she is up

When the night specter reached the grave, it paused, and remained motionless for several minutes.

Sunflower Sam crept as near as he dare, and

watched with much interest.

As the white-draped figure stood there, like some spectral statue, by the grave, the dense mass of black clouds overhead parted, and the moon sent down a mellow flood of light into the gulch, seeming to dwell with particular intensity about the grave.

A feeling of awe crept over the spy, who was

crouching close to the ground.

"By Jove! that strikes me as rather queer!" he mused. "It makes a feller feel somehow as If that thing in white really was a spook! Ha!" The exclamation was caused by hearing loud

yells in the vicinity of the Chinese camp. "I'll bet they've discovered the ghost!" Sam muttered, "or else why all that yelling?"

As he spoke, something whizzed by his ear, and in close proximity to his head, and the next instant came the report of a rifle.

"As I thought; Mora and his party have discovered the ghost!" Sam concluded, "and that bullet was meant to down it, or else to plug me, I don't know which. But, I'm goin' to be ahead of the field, and see whether the thing in white is really a ghost or not!"

He darted toward the grave where the specter had been standing, but only to discover—nothing! The mysterious white figure had disap-

meared!

Look in whichever direction he would, he could see no signs of the spectral perambulator. "What does it mean. That thing could not have got away so quickly, if it was human, I'll swear to that!"

He stood by the grave, gazing around him in positive astonishment, when the singing of another bullet past his ear, and the report of a rifle warned him to seek a safer locality; so he strode away toward You Bet. .

When he arrived in front of the hotel, he found a considerable crowd of men congregated there, who were holding an excited consultation.

Sam's arrival was hailed with approval. "What was the firing up the gulch?" was the question put to him by a dozen voices simultaneously. "Who was shootin'?"

"Some one was firin' at the ghost," Sam replied, with a laugh.

"The ghost?"

"Yes, the ghost. Didn't you see it?"

"No! no! Tell us about it!" "Well, I was up scoutin' near the Beauty mine, when a ghost came from this direction, and went straight to Joseph Mora's grave. It was a figure all clad in white, and hadn't any face that was visible. It passed near where I was standin', and so I followed it. While I was watchin' it, from the direction of the mine, there came a shot. I made a rush for the ghost, but when I got to the grave, it had disappeared! Another shot from the Chinese camp nigh clipped my ear off, and so I concluded to get into safer quarters, and here I am."

"The Chinese camp?" echoed a dozen voices. "Yes, gents. It may be an unwelcome surprise to you, but you are likely to be thrown out of work, unless you want to work for rat-eaters' wages. Boss Harkley, of Carterville, has bought the Agnes mine, and he and Max Mora have consolidated, and the two mines will henceforth be worked by Chinamen, unless you want to accept Chinese wages. There's two hundred of the pig-tail cusses on the edge of the camp now, and the entrances to both mines are surrounded!"

Loud cries of indignation and astonishment escaped the crowd at this announcement.

in this camp!" cried Joe Colby. "Are you not givin' us a game, Sunflower?"

"Positive!" Sam replied. "I followed Max Mora and Augustin Andre down to the Beauty mine. There they were met by Boss Harkley and his band of two hundred Chinamen."

"Jest as I told you!" cried the veteran miner, Steve Stoddard, who on a previous occasion had predicted such a thing. "I told ye, didn't I, thet ef the mine were left to Max Mora, he'd run in a gang o' rat-eaters, an' shet us out?"

For a time the wildest excitement and confusion prevailed. The news spread like wildfire, and the main street in front of the hotel became packed with an excited populace.

Bonfires were kindled, and weapons gleamed,

on every hand.

The crowd were in a frenzy of sudden-wrought rage, to learn that their occupation had been usurped by a lot of Chinamen, whom they held in the utmost contempt, and threats were freely

made against the lives of the two bosses, Harkley and Mora, while Augustin Andre also came in for his share of the abuse.

"Whar's Sunflower Sam? We want him!" "Hurrah! A speech from Sunflower Sam!" "Hip! hip! 'rah for the boy from Shasta!"

These and other cries of a similar character rung out, and Sunflower Sam was finally found in the bar-room of the hotel, and half dragged upon the veranda by Joe Colby.

At which a tremendous yell went up. "'Rah fer the Sunflower from Shasta! He's ther boy as will lead us ag'in' the heathen Chinee! We'll wipe ther flat-faced niggers from

ther face o' ther earth!" Another tremendous cheer went up, and it was some time before Joe Colby could make his

stentorian voice heard:

"Shet up yer noise, boys!" he yelled. "How do you expect Sunflower is to address you, when ye'r' kickin' up sech a racket!"

That was sufficient, and the mob in the street became quiet, in a few minutes.

Then, Sam cleared his throat, and said: "Gents of You Bet, allow me to thank you for the compliment you have paid me, by calling upon me for a speech, inasmuch as I am as yet but a comparative stranger among you.

"I know how you feel about this matter of these Chinamen being run in here, to fill your places, and I don't blame you in the least for being indignant. I have no more love for the race than you have, and believe that our American people have a right to object to being thrown out of work by a class of people who will work literally for nothing, live on nothing, and grow rich in the bargain.

"However, there is policy in most all things, and it is your policy not to be too hasty.

"I see that you are all up in arms, and ready at a word, to make an attack upon the invaders camp, but that is not policy.

"Bloodshed, in any case, is a thing that does no one any good in the long run, and ofttimes, did we stop to take the second thought, we would not do things that we do without reflec-

"These Chinamen are fully armed, and number two hundred strong, not counting four

whites who captain them.

"I heard Boss Harkley say that they all knew how to fight, and presume he is right. They are all camped and by this time prepared to resist an attack, which they probably expect.

"For you to make a charge down on them, in this darkness, would be something like sheer madness as you must see, and the result would be a warm reception, and a loss of life that we cannot afford.

"Therefore, I would argue that the better plain is to wait until morning, and get our bearings by the light of day, before we make any precipitate move."

"Sunflower is right!" declared Joe Colby. "If we hope to get our rights, boys, we can't afford to make no blunders."

The majority of the crowd agreed to the sport detective's argument, and so the attack was not made.

But there was no sleep in You Bet, for the remainder of that night.

All night long, a dozen men paced to and fro across the gulch, to prevent any one from the Chinese camp from getting into town.

But, there was little fear of such an attempt being made; for the noisy demonstration of the populace of You Bet, warned Max Mora and Augustin Andre that they had best remain where they were, as it would not be healthy for them, if they were caught.

All night long a crowd of excited and revenge-"By heaven! If this be true, there'll be trouble ful miners surged to and fro, on the main street of the town, uttering maledictions and threats against their Celestial foes!

CHAPTER XV.

A KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT. As soon as he could slip away from the crowd

unnoticed, Sunflower Sam sought his room in the hotel. Here he opened his trunk, and began to haul out a motley assortment of wigs, false beards and

clothing—a complete store of varied disguises. All had been prepared for his special use be-

fore coming to You Bet. Among this assortment were several varieties

of female "toggery." He now selected a Chinese outfit, consisting of the usual long overshirt, club shoes, a shaved wig, to which was attached a long queue, and a little round cap.

With a little loss of time he donned this disguise, touched his face with a sort of butternut

paint, and was ready for business—a fine-looking

Mongolian.

Buckling his belt of weapons about his waist, beneath the shirt, he descended into the office of the hotel.

The mement he was seen, a wild shout went

"A Chinaman! A Chinaman!"

"Where! Seize him; don't let him escape!" "Git a rope, quick! We'll string him up!" Such and other cries rung out, and a number of the crowd rushed toward the supposed son of Confucius; but, when they saw a pair of cocked

"sixes" leveled at them, they paused. "I wouldn't, if I were you, boys!" Sam suggested, placidly. "I ain't ready to be lynched,

yet!"

"By the dragons, boys," cried Joe Colby. "It's Sunflower, fixed up as a pig-tail rat-eater. Shoot me for a snipe if he don't look like one,

The miners, satisfied of Sam's identity, gave vent to cries of admiration, while Colby demanded: "But what in thunder are you going to do?" "Oh! I'm going on a bit of a reconnoissance," Sam replied. "If I am seen, I'll be taken for one of the Chinamen. Don't worry about me. I'll come back soon, with plans of operation

ready for to-morrow." Then, appointing Colby to keep things as quiet as possible, he left the hotel by the rear, and by a detour, made his way toward the Chinese

camp. As he came to the Mora dwelling, he found Mrs. Mora standing in the doorway, looking very nervous and worried.

She recognized Sam, however, the moment the

light fell upon his face.

"Oh my! Mr. Bristol, is it indeed you?" she cried. "What a good-looking Chinaman you are, to be sure! But can you tell me whatever is the matter? I have been so worried at all this yelling and hooting!"

Sam explained as briefly as possible, conclud-

ing by saying:

"But we will beat them. Where is Bly, Mrs. Mora?" "Oh my! she is in bed long ago, sir. Why do

you ask?"

"Because I wished to see her." "Here I am, mamma," cried Bly, making her appearance. "I heard the yelling, and just gct up. Why, Mr. Bristol! Is that you?"

"No. I left myself at the hotel!" Sam laughed. "This is Ching Chung, washeewashee, allee samee. But, Miss Bly, I want you to be ready to accompany me to the office, byand-by. Not now, but after awhile. I shall Lave to scout round a little, first."

"Won't there be danger of Bly's going with

you?" Mrs. Mora asked, anxiously. "I think not. I can arrange to keep her out

of trouble." "What are you going to the office for?" "To get possession of the money that's in the

safe, before it falls into the hands of Max or Andre, for if they should get hold of it, we would have a hard time getting possession of it, again. If I get it, I will place it in your hands, and you and Bly had then best leave You Bet for awhile, until this Chinese trouble is settled at least, and you are free to return to your rightful possessions."

"Oh! sir, how shall we ever be able to repay you for your kindness?" Bly and Mrs. Mora both cried, almost in chorus.

"I do not ask for or expect pay!" Sam replied. "I took an interest in your case owing to the mystery surrounding Mr. Mora's death, and anything I can do for you I do of my own free will, with no expectation of reward." "You shall not go unpaid, if you succeed,"

Mrs. Mora said, decidedly.

"And I do so hope you will succeed," Bly murmured. "I am almost positive I will!" Sam declared.

"The stand Max Mora and Augustin Andre have taken, in bringing the Chinamen here, will kill their prestige so far as the people of You Bet are concerned; and then, too, if your busband left a will, I may possibly get possession of it, yet, as I have another working with me in the matter, from whom I expect much. I must be going now."

"I will be ready to accompany you when you

call," Bly said.

"Very well. Do not venture away from here, however, until you see me again, as some one may be prowling around in hopes of kidnapping you." Sam then took his departure, and stole noise-

lessly and cautiously toward the Chinese camp. "If I can get possession of the money," he mused, "and Kit only scares up another will,

why, that will be glorious!" he soliloquized. "As for the murderer of Joseph Mora-well, I've my eye upon him, methinks, although it may be difficult for me to prove my suspicions." He soon reached the outer edge of the camp,

where it encircled the office. Two tents were near the little shanty, one of

which was but a step from its door.

As stated, no fires had been lighted in the camp, but Sam knew by the gibbering voices, not far away, that the invaders were still astir.

He crouched close to the ground, and occasionally crept on his hands and knees, a little nearer to the nearest tent, expecting every minute to see or hear a guard, but his expectations were not realized.

That afternoon, after the reading of the will, he had locked the office-door and taken the key, so now would have no difficulty in gaining entrance, providing no one had tampered with the lock.

At last he was so close to the tent that he could lift the canvas and look inside, when he discovered that it was unoccupied.

This did not surprise him, for by the Babel of | to." voices near the mouth of the mine he knew that most of the Mongolians were congregated there.

What struck him as being rather odd, however, was the fact that no guard had been placed in the vicinity of the cabin.

Becoming bolder on finding no one in the vicinity, he made a thorough reconnoissance, and found no guard nor any one else within a dozen yards of the office.

"Now is my chance, if ever!" he muttered, as he hastened back toward the Mora residence.

Bly was waiting for him, and they lost no time in returning to the vicinity of the office. Here Sam made another reconnoissance; then he unlocked the door, and they entered.

Sam barred the door on the inside, and they were secure from unwelcome intrusion, for a time at least.

Sam next drew from beneath his Chinese gown a small dark-lantern, and opened the slide barely sufficient to let out a tiny ray that lit the way to the safe, where they knelt down.

"Now you take the lantern," Sam said, "and drawer pried open. hold it so the light falls upon this lock. That's right. Now, I'll see if I can open the safe again."

help mamma so much," said Bly, gleefully. "And we shall have so much to thank you for, Mr. Bristol."

"Don't go to thanking me too much," Sam said, working away at the lock. "The money may not be in here after we get the door open." After some ten minutes' work, he succeeded in

swinging open the two ponderous doors.

And then— It took but a moment to make the disappoint-

ing discovery that the safe had been ransacked, and every cent of money was gone! Some one had been there ahead of them!

And to add to their vexation, simultaneous with this discovery heavy footsteps were heard near the door, and the hoarse voice of Boss Harkley was heard speaking.

CHAPTER XVI. THE GENUINE WILL.

PEGGY PRIM, after drinking her cup of tea, in the parlor of the Andre residence, chatted away for a while to Queenie, but succeeded in eliciting only such answers as "yes" and "no."

This did not seem to bother her much, however, and she talked away until at last she gave

a vawn and said:

"Well, I guess I'll have to be gettin' tew bed, Jane Ann, for I'm powerful tired and want to get a good night's rest, 'cause I s'pect I'll have ter trot around town with 'Gustus, to-morrer, alookin' up stocks an' sech. An' so, if you'll show me where I am to sleep, I'll be much obliged to you, my dear."

"Well, we are not very well supplied with sleeping conveniences," Queenie said, "but for to-night, you can occupy my brother's room, and we will make other arrangements to-morrow."

"But where will 'Gustus sleep?"

"Oh! he will not be in until toward morning, it is likely, and can lie down here on the lounge. He often does it of his own accord."

"For land's sake! You don't tell me that 'Gustus stays out all night at that wicked gam-

bling den?"

"Oh! cert!—that is, if he gets to bucking the tiger very hard!" Queenie replied, with a laugh. "Buckin' the tiger!" echoed Peggy. "Well! well! well! Did you ever! Jane Ann, I want

you to show me straight to my room. I don't want to hear another word about such sinfulness—sech outrageous sinfulness. It's shockin' awful. Oh! what would Deacon Plum say if he were here?"

And Peggy looked utterly shocked.

Queenie lit a hand-lamp and conducted the eccentric old maid up-stairs to the room usually occupied by Augustin Andre, where she left her, and returned to the parlor.

"Heigh-ho! I wish Gus would make a raise of the money and we could go back to the city!" she said, throwing herself on the sofa. "I don't like it here, and I won't marry Max Mora, nor any one else, unless he's a millionaire. And now that that stupid old fool, Peggy Prim, has come, it will be simply unendurable.

"Somehow, I don't believe she is Peggy Prim. She knows all about Connecticut, it is true, but can't dismiss from my mind the impression that she is an impostor, and has come here to pry around for some cause or other. I won't go to sleep, anyhow, till Gus comes in, for there is no telling what mischief she may be up

But, as a rule, resolutions are easier uttered than kept, and so it was in Queenie's case.

She had no intention of going to sleep, but her eyes finally closed, almost in spite of her effort to keep them open, and before she was aware of it, she was sound asleep.

Up-stairs, Peggy Prim had not yet retired to rest, nor were there any indications that she intended to.

Augustin Andre's room was large and comfortably furnished, both as a bed-chamber and as an office.

Among other things was a modern secretary desk, remarkable for its numerous drawers and pigeon-holes.

To Peggy this desk seemed to have a special attraction. Not only did she give it a thorough examination, but she also proceeded to examine everything in it.

One drawer was locked, but this did not seem to bother her, in the least, for, drawing a stoutbladed knife from her pocket, she soon had the

It contained but one thing—a roll of legalruled paper, tied with a pink ribbon.

Peggy lost no time in possessing herself of this "Oh, if we can only get the money, it will document, and when she had untied it, and spread it out upon the leaf of the desk, a cry of exultation escaped her.

Upon the top of the document she read:

"Last Will and Testament of "JOSEPH MORA."

All eagerness, she perused the will, her face expressing great satisfaction.

"What a joy will this be to Dick," she muttered, as she stored the will away, about her person. "It will also be a godsend to poor Mrs. Mora."

She went on with her search, without finding

anything more of importance.

"I've got all I want here, and now the next thing for me to do is to skip. If I could make Queenie a prisoner, before I go, it might not be a bad idea. But, on the whole, I guess I'll leave that job for Dick, for he has the warrant."

She stole softly down-stairs, and without even looking into the parlor, made her exit from the house, with Joseph Mora's genuine will, in her possession.

One point had Augustin Andre lost.

Sunflower Sam had marveled somewhat because there was no guard stationed at the office of the Beauty mine.

It will perhaps be well to explain why there

was not. When Sam brought the news to You Bet camp of the invasion of the Chinese, the two men were in the crowd, who had bargained to kill him.

These of course, were the two ruffians, Green and Guff.

After Sam had made his speech, they held a consultation, and still lingered around the hotel.

When Sam came down-stairs, in his makeup as a Chinaman, they were present, and heard him express his intention of entering the camp.

When Sam held the conversation with Bly and Mrs. Mora, in front of the Mora residence, Green and Guff were within earshot, and heard what was said.

Then, they consulted, again.

"It's mutton fat fer us!" declared Green. "An' beef fat throwed in," agreed Guff.

"Of course. Then, let's get!" "Kerect. There's no time to be lost."

They made their way to the camp, and were challenged by a man doing picket duty.

"Who comes there?" "Two friends of Max Mora, and Gus Andre!" replied Green.

"What do ye want?"

"To see Andre and Mora. We've got important news for 'em!" "Pass along. You'll find 'em at the mouth of

the mine."

Sure enough, Mora, Andre and Boss Harkley were found.

"What the deuce brings you here?" Andre demanded savagely.

"We bring you news worth five hundred dollars," Green replied, coming to the point. "If you want the news, fork over the filthy."

"Bah! get out! What do you take us for? We ain't puttin' out money to a couple of bums like you.'

"All right. Then you don't get the news." "What is the news about?" Andre asked. "Oh! about how you can capture a couple of persons just as easy as by turning over your

"What persons!"

"Sunflower Sam and Bly Barron."

"Spit it out, then. I'll give you yer price!" growled Boss Harkley.

"The money first!" demanded Green, coolly. "No money, no information."

The surly Chinese trader paid over the re-

quired sum, then Green said: "Sunflower Sam and Bly Barron are going to try and gain entrance to the office and steal the money from the safe. Take everybody away

from there, and give 'em a chance to get intothe room. Once in it, you've got 'em dead to rights!" Harkley, Mora and Andre were highly pleased at this information. The guard was removed as

suggested without delay, and a spy set on the lookout. And, Sam and Bly had no sooner entered the office and closed the door, than the fact was: communicated to the villains at the mouth of

the mine. "We've got 'em, now!" Andre cried, jubilantly. "The girl belongs to me, and you can do what you please with the sport."

No objection was made to Andre's claim, but there was a peculiar, deadly gleam in the eyes. of Max Mora, which said plainly enough:

"We'll see whom she belongs to!" The office was at once surrounded by the whites present, as well as by a cordon of armed Chinamen.

Then, Boss Harkley advanced to the door and

cried out:

"Come! Open up this door, and be quick about it, too, or we'll bu'st it down. We have got ye in our trap now, and ye can't get out, so you might as well surrender!"

"Surrender?" cried Sam from the inside; " Never! If you break that door down, there'll be some dead men to plant before you take me!"

Those who knew him, would have known by his tone that he meant "business," but the men now pitted against him did not know the masquerading Deadwood Dick, Junior.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TABLES TWICE TURNED.

HARKLEY was a man of fierce temper, and evidently used to being obeyed, for upon receiving Sunflower Sam's refusal to open the door, he threw himself against it with all his might and main.

There could be but one result. The door was but a frail affair, while the inside bar amounted to comparatively nothing, for the force now brought to bear against it caused it to snap like a pipe-stem, and the door flew open so suddenly that Harkley lost his balance and pitched headlong into the room.

At the same time, having thrust Bly out of the way of bullets behind the shelter of the safe. Sunflower Sam opened a deadly fire with his right and left hand revolvers.

The first shot prevented Boss Harkley from ever rising from the floor and participating in any more assaults, while the second and succeeding shots were fired into the swarm of jabbering Chinamen who poured in.

Bang! bang! rung out report after report, and one after another the sons of Confucius dropped in their tracks, until the doorway became literally choked up with their bodies.

As soon as his revolvers were emptied, Sam threw them aside, and drawing his knife, leaped into the doorway and fought back his foes, desperately and with terrible effect.

For a time it seemed that he was invulnerable against attack, and that he was not destined to be conquered; but the odds were too great.

Urged on by the villainous whites, who took good care to keep out of the way of any stray bullets, the Chinamen crowded faster and faster into the doorway, and several succeeded in getting into the room.

This was a fatal event for Sam, for while he tried to keep back the enemy in front, those in his rear leaped upon him and bore him to the

floor and disarmed him.
"Bind him, securely!" cried Augustin Andre,
now making his appearance. "Where's the

mow making his appearance. "Where's the girl? Ah! here she is! Seize and bind her, too! Both Max Mora and Boss Harkley have been shot, and I will act in their places."

His orders were obeyed; both Sunflower Sam and Bly Barron were made prisoners, and placed under a strong guard of Chinamen near the mouth of the Beauty mine.

The matter of looking after the dead and wounded then began under Andre's supervision.

He and the roughs who captained the Chinamen were now the only four uninjured white

men were now the only four uninjured white men in the camp, Green and Guff having quite suddenly turned up missing.

Boss Harkley and seven Chinamen had been killed outright.

Among the wounded was Max Mora, who was fatally shot, and could not live very long at the furthest.

The wounded were fixed up as comfortably as possible in the office, while the dead were removed to one of the shanties.

When Andre found time to examine the opened

safe, and found the contents gone, his rage knew no bounds.

He went to Sunflower Sam, and demanded to

He went to Sunflower Sam and demanded to know where the money was, but got no satisfaction whatever.

"I know nothing about the money," Sam said. "It is true that Bly and I went to the office to get possession of the money, but on opening the safe, we too found the money missing!"

"You lie, curse you! You have hidden it somewhere!" Andre cried furiously. "You shall tell me where to lay hands on that money or die by inches!"

He subjected both the prisoners to a rigid search, but all to no purpose. The money was concealed nowhere upon their persons.

"Curse you! curse you!" he fairly shricked in his rage and disappointment. "Will ye tell me where that money is? If you don't off goes this girl's ears, then her nose, then her hands and feet. By that time, I guess you'll be ready to tell!"

He was evidently in dead earnest, for he was the picture of a demon incarnate as he drew a knife and stepped closer to Bly.

"I tell you that neither of us has any knowledge of what has become of the money!" Sam protested.

"Bah! You lie! you lie! And you shall both pay the penalty of your folly!"

He seized Bly's right ear, and no doubt would have carried out his inhuman revenge had not his hand been seized while a stern voice cried the single word—

"Stop!"
It was Peggy Prim who uttered the command, and she repeated it.

"Stop! What would you do, 'Gustus? For heaven's sake, are ye a human butcher? These two people don't know about the money!"

"What do you know about it?" the villain roared, savagely.

"More'n you s'pect, cousin. Yer stuck-up sister, Jane Ann, what yer call Queenie, hev packed up her duds and skipped, an' when ye go back tew yer domicile, you'll find a letter on the table tellin' you as how she hev got Joe Mora's boodle, and is goin' off to become a city belle!"

"Ten thousand devils!" gasped Andre.
"Speak! are you telling me the truth, woman?"
"Sure pop!" declared Peggy. "You'll find dockyments to prove it right on ther parlor table. There's another thing I've got ter tell ye: ye better git yer men together in a body, quick as ye can, for them fellers in You Bet hev got preparations already, an' intend ter attack this camp before another ten minutes goes by. They

mean bizness, I tell ye! An' if you ain't all ready to give 'em a warm reception, why, you'll get left—that's all."

Not a little alarmed at this news, Andre held a consultation with his white allies, and the work

of marshaling the Chinamen into defensive positions began. Sunflower Sam and Bly were both tied to a

tree, so that they could not escape, and the Ce-

lestials who had stood guard over them were mustered into the main band.

Bet, the Chinese company made rather an imposing appearance, and Andre viewed them with a grim smile of satisfaction, well satisfied that victory was in store for him.

But, although the body of men waited with Andre at their head, no attack was made nor were there any signs of one being made.

The yelling continued and the bonfires still burned brightly in You Bet camp, but no sounds of human approach gave token of a nocturnal charge.

Andre finally grew impatient and went to hunt up Peggy, whom he had left talking to Bly Barron.

"Confound the old fool, it can't be she has been deceiving me?" he muttered.

When he arrived at the spot where he had left the prisoners, bound to the tree, he saw that he had indeed been deceived, for not only was Peggy Prim missing, but Sunflower Sam and Bly had also been released and had taken their departure.

Furious with rage, Andre returned to the head of his band, resolved to fight as long as there was hope of winning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

What remains to be told, may be summed up briefly.

At daybreak, led by Sunflower Sam, the men of You Bet swept down upon the Chinese camp and a desperate encounter took place.

Well-nerved by liquor, the miners fought with unflinching determination, and after a fierce combat, lasting fully ten minutes, the Chinamen became demoralized, and broke and fled. But, though many of them fled, many were left behind, numbered with the dead or wounded.

To Sunflower Sam belonged the honor of capturing Augustin Andre, who was made a prisoner, by the plucky young detective.

As soon as the battle was over, a vote of the citizens was taken, and it was decided to give the wretch, Andre, an informal trial, at once, and lynch him. As there were "nays," the trial took place, and Andre was sentenced, after evidence had been taken.

Seeing that all was gone, Tyler Green swore that he saw Andre and Joseph Mora enter the Lone Deer Saloon, and they appeared to be quarreling. Shortly afterward the alarm of murder had been given, but Green kept mum, hoping to eventually work big hush-money out of Andre.

A confession was produced, that had been found in Seth Sligo's office, signed by him, saying he had drawn up a will for Joseph Mora, but had made a different one, and given it to the speculator to put away in his safe, while the genuine document was given to Andre.

Peggy Prim at this juncture produced the original will, and Guff and Green, who had been witnesses to it, testified to its genuineness.

Before Andre was executed, he made a full confession of the murder, and of his scheme to get the Mora fortune, which he had long been planning. The murder, he declared, had been provoked by Joseph Mora's meeting him and accusing him of insulting Bly.

Immediately after the execution Deadwood Dick, Junior (our Sunflower Sam) and his wife, California Kit (our Peggy Prim) made their identity known.

They also arrested Queenie Andre for a diamond-robbery in Denver, and sent her there to be tried. It really was in search of her that they had come to You Bet, she having been traced to Tucson. Andre had schooled her well in villainy.

Max Mora died the next day.

The will of Joseph Mora divided everything between his wife and adopted daughter, and of course no taint of dishonor longer rested upon Mrs. Mora.

Soon afterward Dick and Kit left You Bet, but on their way they released Uriah Opedyke, and advised him to return Eastward, lest he run across Peggy Prim.

In due time there will be a wedding in You Bet, and Joe Colby will be happier for possessing Bly Barron as his wife.

The missing money has not yet been found. If young Mora succeeded in opening the safe, as is supposed, and in abstracting the coin and funds, he made no confession, so the mystery bids fair to be unsolved.

THE END.

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